No 11 February 1984

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Editorial

It gives me considerable pleasure to tell you that the next issue of this magazine is destined to be distributed far and wide. At long last we have reached an agreement with the national distributors, Seymour Press Limited, and with the main newsagents, W H Smith and John Menzies. This means that it will be available on the shelves of shops all over the country. Some readers may never have heard of the **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®** game, and will, we hope, be attracted by the magazine and want to learn more about the hobby of Adventure Role-Playing games.

In this next issue we have a special feature about the clubs you can join to meet other gamers, develop your player characters, and enjoy gaming to the full. I invite you to follow the path to adventure and join in the fastest growing, fun-filled hobby in the country.

As well as a new **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS** game scenario, we bring you another bizarre tale from Dave Langford, **Lost Event Horizon**. There are games features from Gordon Barbour and Brian Creese, reviews and news of the clubs, fanzines and forthcoming events; and, of course, the Players Association news and comment. All in all I believe it to be a good mix and I look forward to all your letters, good, bad or indifferent. The constructive ones I will appreciate and try to do something about, and the destructive ones I shall destruct! In any event let me know how you feel. We wish to satisfy all of you all the time, whether you like it or not!

Keith Thomson

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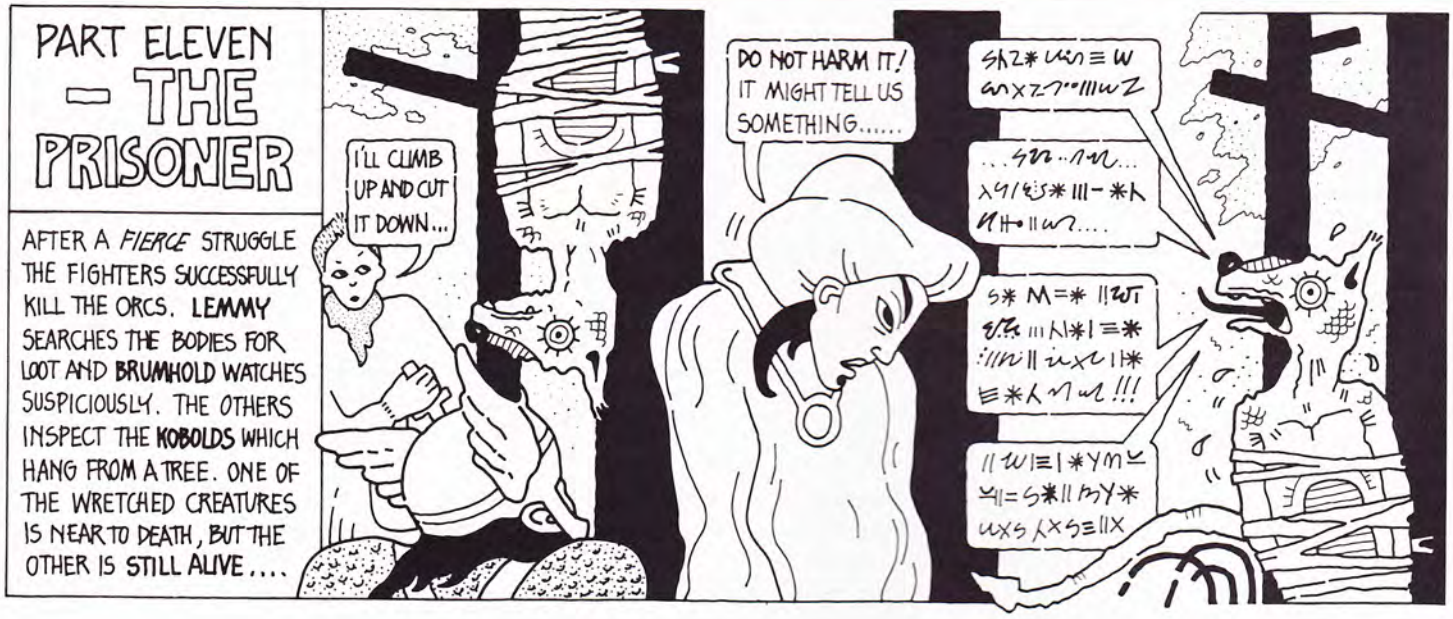
THE ADVENTURES OF NIC


PART ELEVEN
- THE PRISONER
AFTER A FIERCE STRUGGLE THE FIGHTERS SUCCESSFULLY KILL THE ORCS. LEMMY SEARCHES THE BODIES FOR LOOT AND BRUMHOLD WATCHES SUSPICIOUSLY. THE OTHERS INSPECT THE KOBOLDS WHICH HANG FROM A TREE. ONE OF THE WRETCHED CREATURES IS NEAR TO DEATH, BUT THE OTHER IS STILL ALIVE....
I'LL CLIMB UP AND CUT IT DOWN...
DO NOT HARM IT! IT MIGHT TELL US SOMETHING.....

Participants in fantasy role-playing games play the parts of fearless fighters, devout clerics, spell-casting magic users and cunning thieves in many exciting and unique adventures. The following is part of an account of a Basic DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game. The players have just defeated three orcs in a woodland clearing. Sue, the referee or Dungeon Master, has previously prepared the adventure and runs it with reference to the game's rules.

The players and their characters are:

*Nic - **Norva Ironarms** (1st level fighter)*
*Jon - **Brumhold** (1st level fighter)*
*Anne - **Jolinda** (1st level cleric)*
*Terry - **Lemmy** (2nd level thief)*
*Alan - **Sarak** (1st level magic user)*

The players have been travelling for some time, and the fight with the orcs occurred towards dusk. Sarak points out that it would be foolish to continue at night. Norva offers to find a place for them to camp, but Jolinda advises against splitting up the party in case any more orcs appear.

Meanwhile Lemmy has been rummaging through the orcs' pouches and clothing looking for loot. From her description of the encounter Sue knows that the orcs have 3-18sp each, and as Lemmy checks each orc Sue rolls for the amount of money found on 3d6.

Sue — 'OK. Lemmy finds 12sp on the first orc, 15sp on the next and 7sp on the last.'

As Lemmy puts the silver into her sack, Brumhold watches her, closely. Lemmy shows her annoyance: 'You got nothing better to do than get in my way, muscle-head?'

The rivalry between Jon's character and Terry's spills over again. Lemmy and Brumhold argue over who should carry the treasure, since Brumhold believes that the thief will try to keep most of it for herself, if he doesn't stop her. Lemmy insists, and finally Brumhold agrees to let her carry it.

Norva and Jolinda watch the surrounding woods, while Sarak inspects one of the surviving kobolds. The orcs have been torturing the creature — and Sarak puts it out of its misery with an almost imperceptible move of his dagger.

Brumhold — 'Hey! What are you doing? It was helpless!'

Sarak — 'Yes it was. It was also dying. Not all enemies die in heroic ways, Brumhold.'

Jolinda agrees, since she had considered ending the evil creature's life anyway. Norva ignores them — he can't bring himself to be sorry for a kobold — and his diligence is rewarded. Sue tells Nic that his character has seen a movement from the kobold hanging from the tree. Norva goes over for a closer look, and finds it to be attached by a rope tied around its feet and lashed to an overhead branch. It looks dead to the others.

Lemmy — 'It might have some money. I'll climb up and cut it down.' As a thief, this poses few problems for Lemmy, and Sue tells Terry that her character is able to release the kobold with the flick of a knife. As it falls, it lets out a cry.

Norva — 'I told you it was alive.'

Sue, referring to her notes, decides that the kobold will not allow itself to be captured again. It tries to escape.

Norva — 'I chase after it, and hit it with my sword.'

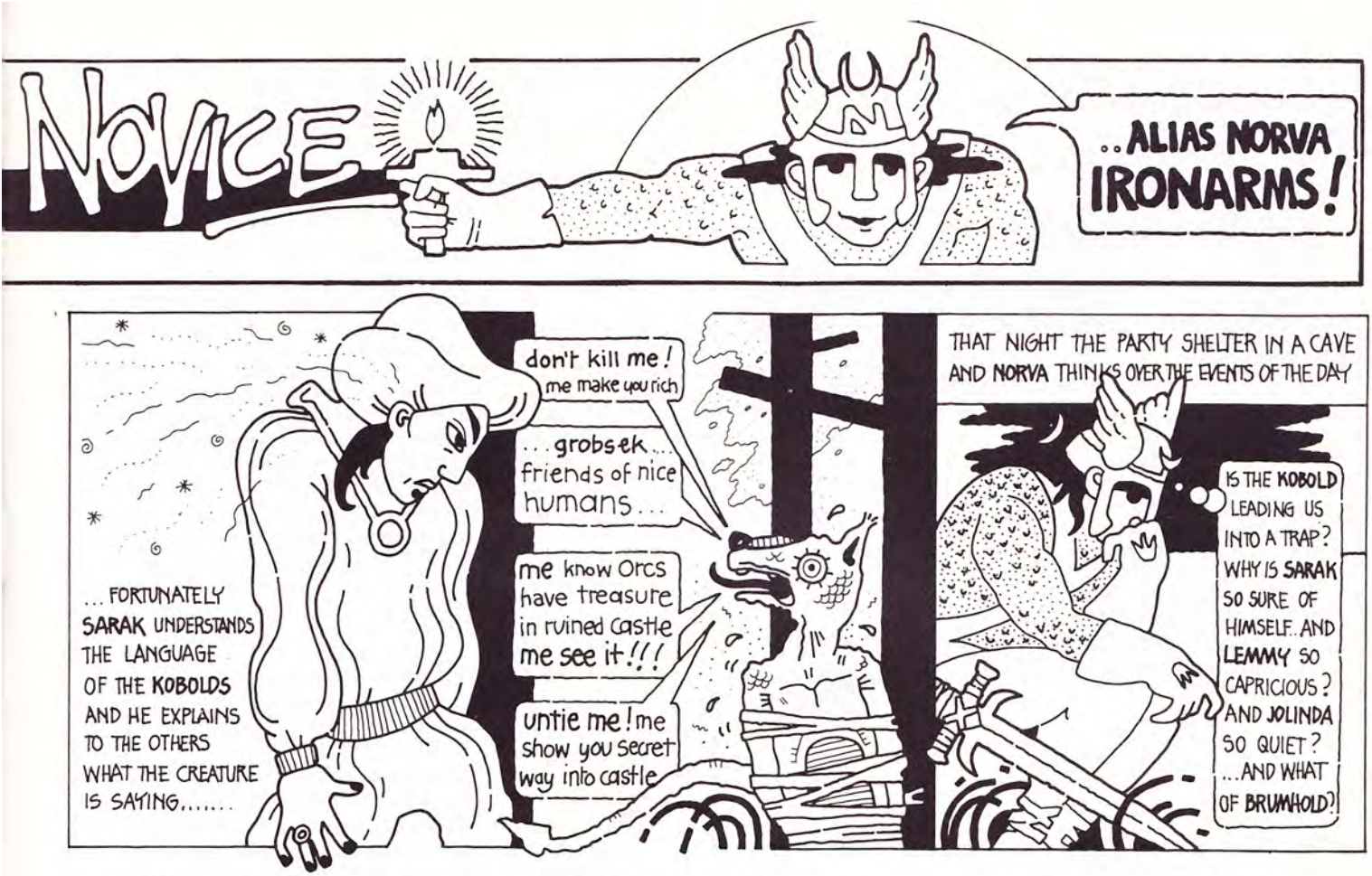
Sarak — 'No! Take it alive! It might be able to tell us something.' Norva changes his mind just in time, and catches the fleeing kobold before it can get very far. Brumhold takes a rope from his backpack and ties the beast up again, muttering about magic users who can't make up their minds....

Sarak moves over to ask the kobold its name, speaking to it in its own tongue, since kobold is one of the extra languages he can speak due to his high intelligence.

Kobold — 'Er... Grobsek.... Don't kill me, me make you rich.'

Lemmy — 'He's lying. Let's -'

At this point Sue has to break in to remind Terry that the conversation is being held in the kobold language, and that Lemmy hasn't understood any of what has been


NOVICE
..ALIAS NORVA IRONARMS!
...FORTUNATELY SARAK UNDERSTANDS THE LANGUAGE OF THE KOBOLDS AND HE EXPLAINS TO THE OTHERS WHAT THE CREATURE IS SAYING.....
don't kill me! me make you rich
...grobsek... friends of nice humans...
me know Orcs have treasure in ruined castle me see it!!!
untie me! me show you secret way into castle
THAT NIGHT THE PARTY SHELTER IN A CAVE AND NORVA THINKS OVER THE EVENTS OF THE DAY
IS THE KOBOLD LEADING US INTO A TRAP? WHY IS SARAK SO SURE OF HIMSELF.. AND LEMMY SO CAPRICIOUS? AND JOLINDA SO QUIET? ...AND WHAT OF BRUMHOLD?

said so far. Before the game can get bogged down in an argument between the players, Alan tells Sue that his character will translate everything as it is said from now on.

Sarak — 'Grobsek, my friend says she will kill you if you lie.'

Kobold — 'No, no! Grobsek friend of nice humans. Orcs have treasure in ruined castle. Me see it. You follow me, and get very rich.... Grobsek go back to family....'

Brumhold and Norva are very keen to go the castle, where a good fight and some rich reward seem to be in the offing. Jolinda is cautious — wary of believing a disgusting kobold — and presses Sarak to ask for more details.

Sarak — 'How is the castle defended?'

Kobold — 'Many orcs.... big machine that throws stones.'

Lemmy — 'A catapult! That's me out!'

Sarak — 'How many orcs?'

Kobold — 'Lots.'

Sarak — 'How many? 20? 40? 60?'

Sue tells Alan that Grobsek gets confused, and finally nods furiously, saying '60, 60!' and 'lots, lots' over and over.

Lemmy — 'He's too dumb to count!'

Sarak asks Grobsek to count for him. The kobold shrugs and begins: '0, 1, 2, 3, some, many, lots, lots and lots....'

Lemmy — 'Useless! Let's leave him behind - preferably dead.'

Grobsek whimpers pathetically after the thief's words are passed over. He insists he knows a secret way into the castle.

Sarak — 'What is this secret way?'

Kobold — 'Untie me. Me show where.'

Lemmy takes some rope from her back-pack, and fashions a noose, which she slips over the kobold's head. Grobsek is not very happy about this, and he spits at her as he struggles.

Kobold — 'No! Not hang Grobsek from tree again! Me take.... lead you to big gold. Me don't want to die!'

Sarak — 'Be still now, or I'll turn you over to her.' He cuts the rope from the kobold's feet. The frightened creature makes a futile bid for freedom once more, pulled up short by the noose around its neck.

Lemmy — 'What a dummy.'

Norva is wary of the kobold leading them into a trap, but Sarak is confident now that Grobsek is telling the truth.

Sarak — 'It's a chance we have to take. I don't think he has any love for the orcs after what they did to his mates here. He believes Lemmy wants to kill him at the first opportunity, and I don't think he wants to give her the chance.'

At last the party leaves the clearing, moving along the trail. The players tell Sue that they are looking for a place to rest. Brumhold and Norva find a small cave off to one side, and after a quick check, declare it to be safe. They move in, trussing Grobsek up at the back.

Norva takes the first watch, staring out over the dark woods, thinking over the events of the day, and relishing the forthcoming struggle with the orcs. He grips his sword, looking at his fellow companions. Sarak, who always seems to take decisions without asking; Lemmy, who seems so capricious; Jolinda, who has become strangely quiet and pensive while the kobold has been in their company; and Brumhold.

Nic Novice is beginning to realise that there are many ways in which he can make his fighter a very different character to Jon's Brumhold. He is quieter, more thoughtful, and more aware. Brumhold will rush into danger for glory, but Norva will listen to good advice, and take all sensible precautions. Come the morrow, though, he will be right at his fellow fighter's side when they free the people of Abone from the menace of the orcs once and for all.

Next month - the Attack

BY JIM BAMBRA AND PAUL RUIZ

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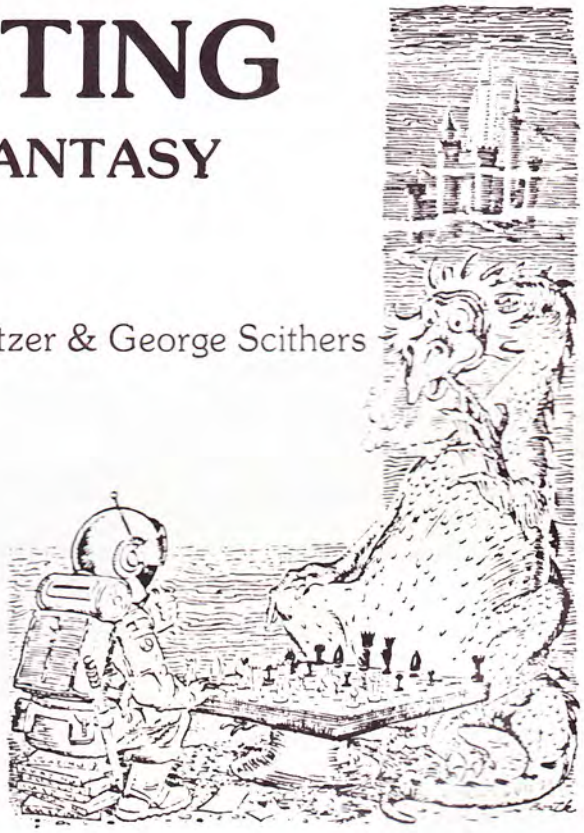

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Time and motion in the D&D game: a figure such as 6", which looks as though it means six inches, may mean sixty feet, or even 180 feet, or alternatively it could mean six inches.

A page for the not-so-experienced adventurer

by Roger Musson

One of the aspects of the D&D® game that newcomers find hardest to deal with is the simple business of handling time and motion in the game. It has to be admitted that the way this is presented in the rule books is very confusing. For instance, a figure such as 6", which looks as though it means six inches, may mean sixty feet, or even 180 feet, or alternatively, it could mean six inches. Unfortunately, the only way to tell which, is by context. Thus, the 1" beam of a bull's eye lantern is probably 10' wide, but the 2-20" variation in human height is unlikely to mean 20-200'. Weight is expressed either in pounds (abbreviated, peculiarly, to a hash) or in gold pieces, and the rules skip about between the two units. Times are for the most part given in terms of turns, rounds and segments, rather than familiar units such as seconds and minutes, and this does not really help.

When the original Basic rules were completely revised and overhauled, there was an excellent opportunity to clear up all the existing confusions, and express everything in everyday units, as well as to clear up some of the other confusing parts of the rules (such as the system of arithmetic where a plus-rated shield lowers your armour class) — but alas, the opportunity was not taken, which means we are probably saddled with the system now, and must make do with it as best we can.

As far as the distance units go, there seems to be not much one can recommend other than the application of common sense. The concept of using scale distance (1" = 10' or 10 yards) is a hangover from the origins of the game in miniatures wargaming, in particular the **Chainmail** system. It is common practice among miniature wargamers to express the movement rate of a unit in inches and then use a ruler marked in inches to actually move the figures across the playing area. I guess the original intention was that the D&D game should be played the same way, yet I have never come across anyone who **does** use such a method. I shall return to this subject in a later issue.

One also has to try and use common sense to determine when 'indoor' and 'outdoor' scales are applicable. That this is not simple is shown by the way the **Players Handbook** attempts to discriminate between range and the area of effect of spells (p39). Similarly, some situations, which are technically indoors, have conditions which approximate to outdoors. In a wide corridor in a giant's castle, if it is clear and well-lit, a pony could reasonably travel just as fast as it could along a road leading to the castle. And if the corridor is straight and very tall, the restrictions on bows in ordinary corridors will not apply.

With regard to weight, the trick is to divide all gold piece weights by ten and think of them in pounds. It is well worthwhile to draw up a list of common objects (lanterns, rations, etc) and assign them a reasonable weight in pounds, to use when calculating encumbrance.

How one handles time is most important. An accurate record of time elapsed must be kept during an adventure; but on the other hand, it does not need to be too accurate. You will certainly need to know how many hours an adventure has taken, but you will not need to know exactly how many seconds it has lasted, even if it were possible to be that precise in one's timekeeping. So do not be afraid to lose a few seconds here and there in your timekeeping. What is vital is to keep up the flow of the adventure. In a wargame one may need to follow minutely a detailed sequence of play where every step must be rigidly counted. To take such an approach in the D&D game is both unnecessary and undesirable.

Therefore, do not attempt to keep track of every segment. In fact, for most purposes one can do away with the segment altogether. I really only use the unit when doing things like determining which of several spell-casters gets a spell off first. Thus, suppose a character engaged in combat wishes to perform some simple action at the start of a round — say, drawing a sword, which will take him one segment or so. His opponent has a weapon ready, so will automatically strike first. Then the first character, having drawn his sword, strikes back. You should not think as follows: first character has expended 11 segments, including one for drawing a sword, the other only 10, therefore the second character is still one segment ahead and will strike first next time again. If you try to keep track of time like that, soon all the combatants will be out of step, and it will take you far too long to work out whose turn it is to strike. The pace of play will suffer. The one-minute combat round is so much longer than the actual time needed to strike a blow, that it should be considered to contain all sorts of other unspecified activity — dodging and parrying and so forth. Thus each round can be considered to 'absorb' surplus segments. This means that every combat round can be considered to start at the same instant for everyone; therefore in your time record you only need to note down the minutes as they elapse.

Note also that for this reason it is quite unimportant exactly how many segments it does takes to draw the sword — it is only the relative length of the action compared to what an opponent is doing at the same time that matters.

For most purposes I simply use the minute as the standard unit of time. Thus announcements to the players take the form of 'after five minutes you still hear nothing' or 'having rested for ten minutes you proceed' rather than mentioning five rounds or one turn. By and large, this makes things much more comprehensible — not only to the players; also to me!

Roger Musson

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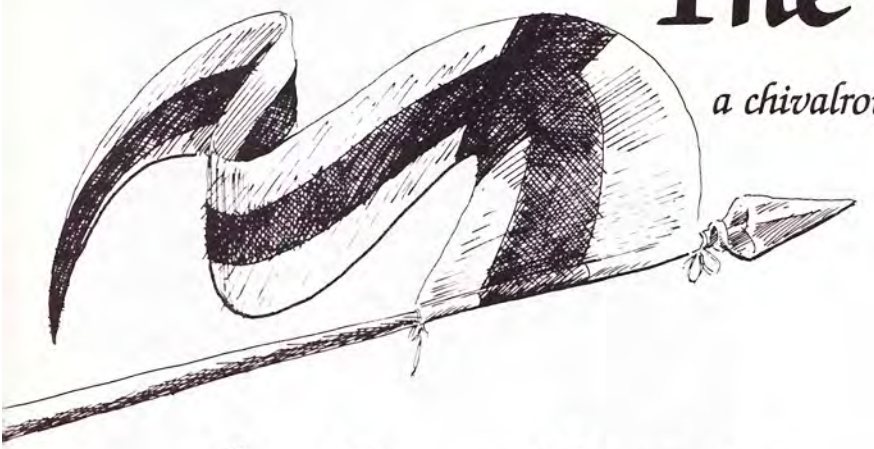
The CAVALIER

a chivalrous cavalryman for the AD&D™ game



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by Gary Gygax

Here it is, the latest addition to the list of official character classes for the AD&D™ game. In case English readers find the name confusing, we had better say from the outset that this is not the sort of Cavalier who rode around with Prince Rupert, wearing the frilly shirts and the curly hair, but a chivalrous, knightly horseman, a crusader or Knight Templar. In order that it may be utilised by those whose campaign does not have a feudal, medieval feel, certain changes have been made to the concept of the mounted knight, his legends and history, so that the class will be compatible with the overall game system.

The Cavalier

The Cavalier character class is a sub-class of fighter. In order to become a cavalier the character must enter service to some deity, noble, order or special cause. The DM must decide if this requirement can be met, and will likewise monitor the behaviour of the character to ensure that it is played with honour and bravery at the forefront of all activity. The 'code' of chivalry which follows is generalised; the DM will augment or modify this to suit the requirements of the particular campaign.

In general, cavaliers will be drawn from the correct social classes — gentle or noble birth — or be of the accepted aristocracy for candidacy to knighthood. In effect, this means that the character must be of knightly, noble or royal birth, with the financial means to support the training necessary for entrance to this class. The **Social Class** tables on page 13 of this magazine may be used to determine if this is so.

Initially, the cavalier will be of Good alignment, whether Lawful, Neutral or Chaotic. Alignment change will not adversely affect a cavalier when it is gradual and reasoned. Change of alignment after 4th level is subject to all of the usual penalties, however.

The character must have minimum ability scores of 15 in strength, dexterity and constitution, and 10 in intelligence and wisdom. No bonus to earned experience is ever applicable, regardless of attribute score totals.

Service is the paramount requirement for assumption of cavalier status. This service can be to a deity, state, order or any master, particularly one of high station. After attaining knighthood, the cavalier can renounce former service, and champion a creed or cause, or be simply a rogue. In all cases, social status must be maintained. The activity of the cavalier is such that it precludes any other profession other than that of paladin; the paladin-cavalier is discussed hereafter. Other than this there can be no multi-classed or dual-classed cavalier.

The knightly profession of cavalier demands constant training and practice at arms and warfare. A portion of each day not spent adventuring must be spent in mounted arms drill and combat practice on foot.

Mounted combat is the *forte* of the cavalier. When human cavaliers are mounted, they make all attacks at one level above their actual level of experience. This applies only when the mount is a horse or another of the listed steeds for the class.

Knowledge of horses and other mounts enables the cavalier to be able to estimate the relative worth of a steed, gauging if it has low (one third or fewer of the maximum possible hit points for the creature), average or high worth (two thirds or more of the maximum). Any steed selected by the cavalier will have +2 hit points per hit die (up to the maximum number of points per die). Other special abilities are covered in the **Horsemanship and Mounts** section which follows.

Weapons of many kinds are known to the cavalier. The selection of weapons, proficiency and eventual specialization with them are different from the other character classes. The lance must always be the first weapon of proficiency and specialization. Other weapons which a cavalier may use are listed below, along with a table of weapon proficiency and specialization. Because personal bravery might be questioned if a cavalier fought at a distance, some orders might forbid the use of missile weapons, although elven orders clearly would not do so.

Weapons skill enables the cavalier to parry more effectively than other kinds of fighters. Should a cavalier choose to parry rather than attack, all of the cavalier's 'to hit' bonuses (from strength, specialization, magical sword, etc) can be subtracted from an attacker's 'to hit' die roll(s). Of course, only one attacker can be so affected. However, the cavalier can also parry a second attack using a shield, reducing that opponent's 'to hit' die roll(s) by one, plus any magical bonuses of the shield (thus, a **shield +1** would reduce the die roll by 2, and so on). If these parries are attempted, the attack of a third opponent will be made as if the cavalier had no shield, since it is being employed in defensive parrying. Cavaliers who perform one or both parries, may not also attack in that round, regardless of whether or not they would be entitled to more than one attack in that round.

A cavalier considers armour as much a badge of station as protection. Thus, the character will always possess the very best and finest-quality armour possible. Appearance is as important as function, so engraving, inlaying and decoration will always be sought. Plate will be preferred to any other type, and

thereafter the cavalier will select armour in the following order of preference: banded/splint; chain; scale; ring. A cavalier will never wear padded or leather armour — such is only fit for thieves and peasants! The preferences above apply even in the case of magical armour — a cavalier would sooner wear banded armour than **chainmail +2**.

Plate Armour

A cavalier from a landed family of knightly or noble birth will always be suited in plate armour. Note that this is different from plate mail in that it does not require extensive use of chainmail, pieces of plate and heavy padding. Thus, plate armour is of the same relative bulk and weight as chainmail, and the wearer can move at a base of 9". All plate armour is carefully fitted to the individual, so not one suit of plate armour in a thousand will fit another person properly. The armour class of plate armour is either 2 or 1, depending upon the quality of workmanship. For game purposes the two sorts are distinguished as Field Plate Armour (AC2) and Plate Armour (AC1). Because of the individual nature of this sort of protection, a suit of magical plate armour will never be discovered. If a cavalier desires magical armour of this nature, it must be specially constructed and enchanted. Such a process will require weeks of fitting, months of work at a forge by the most expert dwarven crafters, the finest mithral or adamantite-alloyed steel, and a year or more of magical enchanting. The cost of such work is certainly in excess of 100,000gp per 'plus' of enchantment, and such armour is correspondingly rare.

CHARACTER RACE TABLE I(A): CHARACTER CLASS LIMITATIONS

Character Class	Dwarven	Elven	Gnome	Half-Elven	Halfling	Half-Orc	Human
FIGHTER							
Cavalier	no	U	no	U	no	no	U

CHARACTER CLASSES TABLE I(A): HIT DICE, SPELL ABILITY AND CLASS LEVEL LIMIT

Character Class	Hit Die Type	Maximum Number of Hit Dice	Spell Ability	Class Level Limit
FIGHTER				
Cavalier	d10	10[1]	no	none

[1] — Initial hit points for a 1st level cavalier range from 4-13 (generated either as d10+3 or 3d4+1), due to the necessity of having to attain the social status necessary for 1st level.

CHARACTER CLASS TABLE II(A): ARMOUR AND WEAPONS PERMITTED

Character Class	Armour	Shield	Weapons[1]	Oil	Poison
FIGHTER					
Cavalier	any[2]	any	any[3]	yes[4]	no[5]

[1] — This heading includes any magical weapons of the type named, unless the use of such a weapon by the class is specifically prohibited in the description of the magic weapon.

[2] — However, padded or leather armour — including studded leather armour — is not accessible to the class. The class also has access to plate armour, not available to any other type of character. The class also is restricted by a scale of preference for types of armour, in the following order (preferred armour first): plate, banded/splint, chain, scale, ring mail.

[3] — However, pole arms and missile weapons other than those listed as acceptable to the class are unacceptable and will never be used. Likewise, those weapons commonly associated with peasants will be shunned.

[4] — Personal use of oil is unacceptable, but its general employment by others and its use in siegecraft are acceptable.

[5] — Poison use is deemed unchivalrous, and relegated to Evil characters only

Improving Abilities

The constant training and endurance of hardship which the cavalier undergoes hardens, strengthens, and toughens the character so that ability scores in the major areas improve slowly with acquisition of experience. When the points for a cavalier's strength, dexterity and constitution are recorded on the player character record sheet, a slash (/) must be made and a percentile dice score recorded after the number, just as is done for fighters with 18 strength. This is done even though the ability score might only be the minimum 15. The score will be shown as 15/xx, where xx is the percentile dice score. As the cavalier gains each additional level of experience, up to and including the 10th, the player should roll 2d10 and add the results together. This score is added to the number to the right of the slash, and if the sum is greater than 99, the number to the left of the slash is increased by one, and the percentile remainder, if any, is shown after the slash. Ability scores in strength, dexterity and constitution for any cavalier may rise as high as 18/00 through this method.

Example of increase in scores: A cavalier character has attained 2nd level, and undergone the appropriate training. 2d10 are rolled for each of the three abilities affected by level acquisition, and the numbers rolled were (strength) 03, (dexterity) 16 and (constitution) 14. They are added to the existing totals as follows: Str 17/92 becomes 17/95, Dex 16/29 becomes 16/45 and Con 15/88 becomes 16/02. Since 1 full point of constitution has been gained, an adjustment in hit points and system shock/resurrection percentages must be made.

Saving Throws
All of a cavalier's saving throws are made on the regular table for fighters. However, **fear** of any sort, magical or otherwise, will never affect a cavalier. Those of Good alignment radiate a **protection from fear** in a 1" radius, so that all allied creatures within this radius are also immune to the effects of **fear**. Similarly, spells or magical phenomena which affect the mind are 90% unlikely to have any effect on a cavalier character. Thus, such powers as **beguilement, charm** (except that derived from comeliness), **domination, hold, hypnosis, magic jar, possession,** a psionic **mind blast, sleep, suggestion,** etc, are unlikely to have any effect, for the cavalier is first entitled to resist such powers with a 90% chance of success, and is then entitled to a saving throw, if applicable. Note that illusionist spells which affect the mind are not included in the above list; the saving throw vs such spells is made at +2 by the cavalier.

Damage
The specific dedication of Good cavaliers is such that they are able to survive at negative hit-point totals. The maximum number of negative hit points allowable is equal to the number of hit points the cavalier had at 1st level, 4-13. When a negative number of hit points is reached, the cavalier can no longer attack, but must rest immediately, bind wounds and seek healing. Normal healing of wounds is the same as for fighters, except that Good cavaliers receive a bonus of 1-4 hit points at the end of each full week of normal healing.

Acceptable Background
Because of the many possible social structures in different campaigns, hard and fast rules are not possible here. The family background of a cavalier character must be aristocratic, however, and if a feudal system prevails in the campaign, the cavalier *must* be from a family of gentle, noble or royal origin. Landless aristocrats (knights and nobles) are precluded from having their child enter the cavalier class at 1st level immediately, since they are unable to afford the training and equipment needed. Such families (as well as lesser families being particularly honoured) might, however, be allowed to have a child candidate enter the cavalier class as a 0-level Horseman retainer of a knight, with 1d4+1 (2-5) hit points and -1,500 experience points, work up to a 0-level Lancer with 2d4+1 (3-9) hit points, and eventually become a 1st level Armiger retainer with 3d4+1 (4-13) hit points (see the experience point table hereafter). Social station and position are always of utmost importance to the cavalier.

In all cases, elven and half-elven cavaliers *must* be of landed knightly or noble birth, and furthermore must be high elves or gray elves; no other derivation is allowed.

Horsemanship and Mounts
All cavaliers are virtually born and bred to the saddle. They are unlikely to be thrown therefrom, or to be injured if their mount falls, and the base 85% probability against either occurring is increased by 1% per level — 86% at 2nd, etc. A cavalier will ride only a trained warhorse unless mounted travel is absolutely necessary and no such mount is available. At higher levels, the cavalier can also ride other kinds of steeds, as follows.

3rd level: At this level, the cavalier can vault into the saddle with bulky armour and have the steed underway in 1 segment.

5th level: At this level, the cavalier can urge the mount to greater speed than normal. The additional speed possible equals a 2" bonus to movement rate, and this can be sustained for up to 6 turns. The extra speed thus gained will have no ill effects upon the mount, although normal rest and feeding are always necessary.

7th level: At this level, the cavalier can handle and ride a pegasus as a steed.

9th level: At this level, the cavalier can handle and ride a hippogriff as a steed.

11th level: At this level, the cavalier can handle and ride a griffon or similar creature as a steed.

In any case, a cavalier's mount will be friendly toward the character as long as it is treated properly. Of course, creatures with Good alignment will not allow any of Evil alignment to come near, and vice versa.

Special Note: Female elven cavaliers are able to handle and ride unicorns as steeds at 4th level.

Followers
The cavalier will eventually attract followers. This occurs as individual reputation and device become known and recognized. Cavaliers of Evil alignment may attract only that kind of follower, and likewise can have only certain sorts of henchmen. Neutral-aligned cavaliers will attract no followers.

Evil Cavaliers
If a cavalier elects to change alignment to Evil, the limitations already detailed apply. Although able to resort to poison use, the Evil cavalier's reputation and device will become known. All cavaliers of good alignment are duty-bound to attack and attempt to destroy cavaliers of Evil alignment.

Hospitality
A cavalier is entitled to full hospitality — food, lodging, and whatever is needed within reason — from all other cavaliers of the same alignment. Of course, Evil-aligned cavaliers may freely ignore such obligations. Hospitality is likewise due from all gentle, noble, and royal households according to their ability, alignment and with reference to any political divisions or previous experience which might affect the relationship.

Cavalier-Paladins
The especially dedicated cavalier is, in fact, a cavalier-paladin. All the rules and guidelines of the cavalier sub-class apply. Likewise, all the rules of the paladin sub-class apply, except as follows: Six magic weapons can be owned, spells are never gained, followers are attracted as to any cavalier. The cavalier-paladin must be of Lawful Good alignment, and remain so.

CAVALIERS (FIGHTERS) TABLE

Experience Points	Experience Level	d10 for accumulated Hit Points	Level Title
(-1,500— -501	*0*	*1d4+1*	*Horseman)*
(-501— -1	*0*	*2d4+1*	*Lancer)*
0—2,500	1	1 +3hp[1]	Armiger
2,501—5,000	2	2	Scutifer
5,001—10,000	3	3	Esquire
10,001—18,500	4	4	Knight Errant
18,501—37,000	5	5	Knight Bachelor
37,001—85,000	6	6	Knight
85,001—140,000	7	7	Grand Knight
140,001—220,000	8	8	Banneret
220,001—300,000	9	9	Chevalier
300,001—600,000	10	10	Cavalier
600,001—900,000	11	10 +3hp	Cavalier, 11th
900,001—1,200,000	12	10 +6hp	Cavalier, 12th[2]

[1] — If qualification for 1st level required progression through two 0-level grades, then hit dice for 1st level are 3d4+1, but in other cases 1d10+3 applies.

[2] — 300,000xps per level beyond 12th. At 13th level and above, level title is Cavalier Commander.

FIGHTERS' *et al* & CAVALIERS' ATTACKS PER MELEE ROUND TABLE

Level	Attacks per Melee Round[1]
Cavalier 1-5	1/1 or 3/2
Cavalier 6-10	3/2 or 2/1
Cavalier 11-15	2/1 or 5/2
Cavalier 16 & up	5/2 or 3/1

[1] — For all thrusting or striking weapons only. The first column is for any such weapon; the second (after the word 'or') shows the rate for weapons of such nature at which the user has gained *specialization*.

CAVALIER ARCHER/CROSSBOWMAN SPECIALIST LEVEL TABLE

Level	Rate of Arrow Fire per Round	Rate of Bolt Fire per Round
1-5	—	3/2
6-10	3/1	2/1
11-15	4/1	5/2
16 & up	5/1	3/1

WEAPONS USABLE BY CAVALIERS (in order of preference)

Weapon Type	Specialization Possibility
Lance	yes; mandatory
Sword, long	yes
Sword, broad	yes; double possible (humans only)
Mace, horseman's	yes; double possible
Sword, bastard	yes
Sword, two-handed	no
Axe, battle	yes
Flail, horseman's	yes
Pick, military, horseman's	yes
Dagger	yes
Sword, short	yes
Scimitar (falchion, etc)	yes; double possible
Bec de corbin	no
Halberd (pole axe)	no
Javelin	yes
Bow, elven short composite	yes (elves, half-elves only)

Note: Missile weapons are least preferred by a cavalier, because they might call into question the personal bravery of the character. This applies only to humans. Characters of already proven personal courage are typically the only ones to specialize in the use of missile weapons.

WEAPON PROFICIENCY AND SPECIALIZATION TABLE FOR CAVALIERS

Level of Cavalier	Number of Weapons of Proficiency	Additional Number of Weapons of Specialization
0 (-2)	1	0
0 (-1)	2[1]	0
1st	3	0
2nd	3	1 (lance)
3rd	4	1
4th	4	2
5th	5	2
6th	5	3
7th	6	3
8th	6	4
9th	7	4
10th & up	7	5

[1] — The second weapon must always be a lance.

Notes Regarding Weapon Specialization for Cavaliers

Normal specialization:
Hand-hurled weapons, thrusting weapons, and striking weapons have normal specialization bonuses of +2 'to hit' and +1 damage. All regular rules apply, and one proficiency number must be given up to bring a *double specialization* to the weapon type.

Double Specialization:
Only certain weapons can be raised to the double specialization class, ie broadsword, horseman's mace and scimitar. As stated, double specialization requires the use of 1 proficiency number, so the total number of proficient weapons will be reduced accordingly. Double specialization is possible for cavaliers only. Bonus 'to hit' is +3 and damage bonus is +3. All specialization bonuses, as usual, are in addition to any others for dexterity, strength, mounted combat, spell effect or weapon-usage.

Archer Specialization:
Elven cavaliers with specialization in the bow can fire while mounted and still gain specialized rate of fire and 'to hit' and damage bonuses. Since they also gain their bonuses for elven race, the base 'to hit' bonus is +3 and damage is +3 also. Half-elves can fire while mounted, but gain no racial bonus. All other standard rules apply.

Half-Elves Archer Specialization:
In order for half-elven cavaliers to specialize in the bow, they must give up two numbers in the proficiency category, so with archer specialization, the total number of proficiencies will be reduced by two.

Half-Elves and Human Crossbow Specialists:
In order for half elves and humans to specialize in crossbow, they must give up 1 number in the proficiency category, so with crossbow specialization, the total number of proficient weapons will be reduced by 1.

Example of Specialization:
Let us assume that a half-elven cavalier has advanced through the first 10 levels in his profession. The development of specialized weapon use and weapon proficiencies are shown by indicating in parentheses the level at which the specialization or proficiency was gained:

Proficient Weapons	Specialized Weapons
lance (1)[1]	lance (2)
sword, long (1)[1]	crossbow (4)
crossbow (1)[1]	mace (6)[2]
mace (2)[1]	mace x2 (8)
dagger (3)	sword, long (10)
sword, short (5)	
sword, broad (6)	
sword, bastard (7)	
axe, battle (9)	
bec de corbin (10)	

[1] — These weapon proficiencies are superceded by subsequent specialization in those weapons, so that they no longer count as weapons of proficiency. Because the half-elven cavalier in this example has elected to specialize in crossbow, the total number of weapon proficiencies available to the character from 4th level is reduced by 1, initially from 4 to 3. The 'proficient weapons' for this character at 10th level are the dagger, short sword, broad sword, bastard sword, battle axe and bec de corbin.

[2] — This specialization was superceded when the cavalier elected to take double specialization in the mace at 8th level. The total number of 'specialized weapons' (counting the mace as 2) is 5, the maximum allowable for a cavalier of 10th level.

Cavalier Lance Specialization:

The lance is *the* weapon of the cavalier sub-class, and it automatically becomes a prime weapon — first as a weapon of proficiency, then as a weapon of specialization at 2nd level. The specialization bonus is +2 'to hit'. Damage bonus is +1 per level of the cavalier using the weapon, when mounted (plus charge bonus for lance, as applicable), or +1 when dismounted. The cavalier's mounted bonus 'to hit' and damage also applies. When the lance is used by a dismounted cavalier, it is treated as an awl with respect to all specifications except length, weight and speed factor (all of which are those of the lance). The weapon is +2 'to hit' in such cases, but damage is as a **pike +1**. For the sake of simplicity, no difference between a light and heavy lance is given. All lances given here are of the heavy variety. Light lances are, in fact, equal to spears.

Chivalry, Knighthood and the Cavalier:
The cavalier must follow a code of conduct and ethics, akin to chivalry. Upon being sworn to knighthood, the cavalier must pledge himself to this code. Failure to sustain the oath is not sufficient reason to revoke knighthood, unless the order or liege lord of the cavalier demands it. In this latter case, the cavalier becomes a fighter, but weapon specialization is not lost.

A cavalier must serve someone or some cause — normally a deity, greater noble, order of knighthood, or the like. Knighthood is normally not conferred prior to age 21. The virtues of a knight are these:

Liberality	*Honour*	*Good Faith*
Glory	*Unselfishness*	*Pride*
Courtesy	*Bravery*	

The code of chivalry is summed up as follows:

Noble service willingly rendered
Defence of any charge unto death
Courage and enterprise in obedience to rule
Respect for all peers
Honour to all above your station
Military prowess exercised in service to your lord
Courtesy to all ladies
War is the flowering of chivalry
Battle is the test of manhood
Combat is glory
Personal glory above all in battle
Obedience and respect from all beneath your station
Scorn for those who are lowly and ignoble
Death to all who oppose the cause
Death before dishonour

Investiture of an esquire to knighthood must be done by a cavalier of two or more levels above the candidate, or by any noble. The ceremony can be a simple dubbing with a sword, or it can be a full ritual of fasting, vigil, investment and celebration.

INFORMATION FOR THE DUNGEON MASTER

Combat Table:
Cavaliers use the table for fighters. Remember that when mounted, cavaliers attack at 1 level higher than their actual level of experience.

Saving Throws:
Cavaliers save as fighters, with 90% immunity to mind-affecting spells other than illusions and +2 vs illusion spells. They are immune to **fear** and its effects.

Training:
A cavalier must always be trained by a cavalier of at least 4th level, or one of 2 levels above his own, whichever is the higher. After attaining 6th level, however, cavaliers no longer need training of any formal sort; their normal regimen will suffice.

Starting Money & Equipment:
The funds and equipment of the beginning character depend on his or her social class:

LMC: 20-80gp, shield, sword (any), riding horse
MMC: 20-80gp, shield, dagger, sword (broad or long), light warhorse
UMC: 20-80gp, shield, chainmail, sword (broad or long), lance, light warhorse
LUC: 70-180gp, shield, plate mail, dagger, sword (long or broad), lance, medium warhorse
MUC: 70-180gp, shield, field plate armour, dagger, sword (long or broad), lance, heavy warhorse
UUC: 130-180gp, shield, plate armour, dagger, sword (long or broad), mace, lance, heavy warhorse with leather barding

Horses are assumed to be complete with tack, harness, saddle and saddlebags appropriate to the station of the cavalier.

Followers:
Unlike other characters, cavaliers begin to attract followers at low level. These troops are men-at-arms of one sort or another. The type of followers attracted at each level is determined on the table in the DMG for fighters. The number of troop followers is shown below. Those lost are not replaced except by troops from succeeding levels. The cavalier must go to a locale where such men-at-arms are located in order to attract the followers. Although the followers do not demand wages, they must be fed, cared for, and rewarded as suitable for the conditions.

The followers attracted are:

4th level: 1-4 men-at-arms, plus
5th level: 2-8 men-at-arms, plus
6th level: 3-12 men-at-arms, plus
7th level: 6-24 men-at-arms, plus
8th level: 12-48 men-at-arms, plus
9th level: 24-96 men-at-arms, plus
10th level: 48-192 men-at-arms, total

Neutral cavaliers will attract regular men-at-arms only in rare circumstances, such as when they champion a cause. For example, some neutral forest dwellers might be in conflict with a state which is governed by Evil or Good rulers who wish to conquer the woods people. If the cavalier champions the cause of the woodland folk, he will attract numbers of their fighters (men-at-arms). They will not remain if he thereafter goes elsewhere.

Evil cavaliers will attract only bandits, brigands and the like. They could actually attract orcs or hobgoblins if the circumstances allow. If monsters of 1+1 hit dice or greater strength are considered, reduce the total number accordingly, if the result will overcompensate for the penalties.

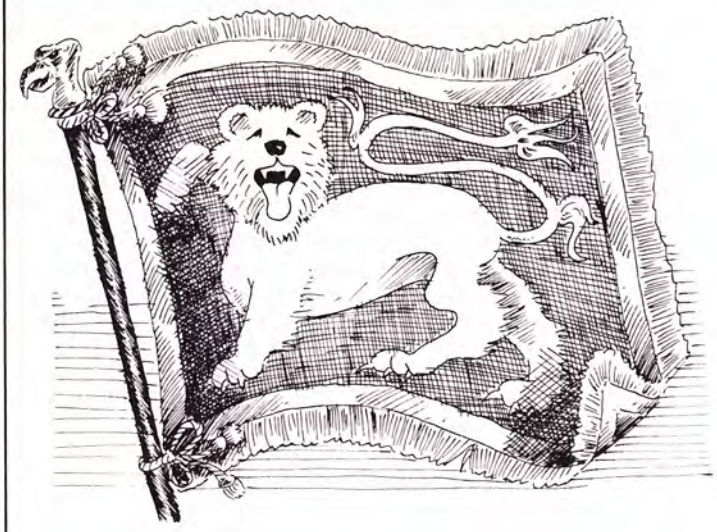
Leaders of Followers:
For every 20 troops which serve a cavalier there will be a fighter follower-leader of 5th level (see **DMG** under *Followers, Fighters*). For every 60 troops there will be a 6th level leader and a 3rd level lieutenant as well. These gains will be made as men-at-arms reach appropriate totals. They will not be replaced if they are slain, although the cavalier can, of course, seek to recruit mercenaries to do so.

Special leaders for Evil cavaliers' troops will be of Evil alignment or greater power, ie a troll is about equal to a fighter. There is also a 1% per level chance that an encountered intelligent monster of fewer hit dice and like alignment will become a follower of the Evil cavalier. Intelligent monsters of like alignment have a chance of 5% per level of the Evil cavalier of being disposed to co-operate with, or at least remain neutral to, the character if service is not considered.

Upkeep of followers of all sorts requires only food, lodging and whatever else can be provided according to the circumstances of the cavalier. Of course, the cavaliers should value all followers and provide for them to the best of their abilities.

Henchmen:
The total number of henchmen possible for a cavalier character is 1 greater than the number shown on the charisma table, 3 greater if the cavalier is of Good Alignment. The sorts of henchmen which a cavalier will (or can) accept (attract) are:

Good Alignment	Neutral alignment	Evil alignment
clerics	druids	clerics
fighters	fighters	fighter
cavaliers	cavaliers	cavaliers
paladins	magic users	magic users
magic users	thieves	thieves
bards	bards	assassins
jesters	jesters	jesters



Retainers:
As soon as a cavalier of Good alignment reaches 4th level (Knight Errant), he must acquire at least 1 retainer. This can be an Armiger or a Scutifer (or both). At 5th level (Knight Bachelor), the cavalier must have both an Armiger and a Scutifer in service. At 6th level (Knight), an Esquire must be added to the staff of retainers. At 7th level (Grand Knight), a Horseman (herald) and a Lancer (guard) must be added to the staff. At 8th level, the Banneret must bring at least an additional mounted man-at-arms to his staff of retainers. All cavalier class retainers will serve for nothing more than care, upkeep and training, as applicable. Gifts are always accepted, of course. Mounted men-at-arms (and other possible retainers) are dealt with in the **DMG**.

Only when a cavalier reaches 9th level can he willingly travel without a full complement of staff. At that level, the cavalier can travel alone, or with a horde, as he pleases. At lower level, the master of the cavalier can require that he travel sans retainers.

Battle Flag:
The cavalier of 4th or higher level is entitled to fly a pennant from his lance. This must always be done on the battlefield. A duplicate of this flag will be held by the Esquire, with Armiger and Scutifer, to mark the territory of the cavalier. If this marker is lost, dishonour accrues to the cavalier, and he must make every effort to regain the lost pennant.

Armorial Bearings:
The armorial bearings of a cavalier must always be displayed when he does battle (in tournament or joust, status can be kept unknown by use of a solid cover to hide bearings — the 'black knight', etc). When travelling, the armorial bearings can be covered, but when an encounter occurs, the cavalier will always display the escutcheon to a possible opponent able to understand the meaning of the shield devices. If you are unable to assign proper armorial bearings, consult a book on heraldry.

Obedience:
Cavaliers cannot be controlled in battle situations, charging any enemy in sight, with the following order of preference:

1. powerful (mythical) monsters (dragons, demons, giants, etc) or enemy leaders
2. opponent cavaliers of great renown
3. opponent cavalry of noble status
4. opponent cavalry
5. opponent elite footmen
6. opponent camp
7. opponent missile troops
8. levies or peasants

The cavalier's charge will be made at full speed, regardless of army cohesion, intervening friendly troops, or other such considerations.

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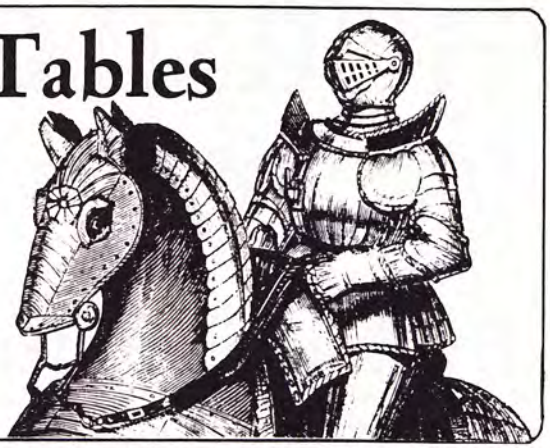
Social Status and Birth Tables

by Gary Gygax



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The information in this article is included for two reasons. Firstly, it will be required by players and DMs who wish to run a Cavalier player-character or NPC in their campaign. Secondly, it will add a new element to the make-up of all characters and NPCs. The DM should determine the social class of each character in the campaign. Guidelines as to the typical members of that class are likewise presented, although the DM can modify these distinctions to suit the particular circumstances of any situation.

SOCIAL CLASS

The DM should use the following table to determine the social class of each character in the campaign, where the class of the character is not immediately apparent from the situation.

Social Class Table

Die Roll	Social (/Economic) Class
01-04	Lower lower class (LLC)
05-10	Middle lower class (MLC)
11-20	Upper lower class (ULC)
21-35	Lower middle class (LMC)
36-55	Middle middle class (MMC)
56-87	Upper middle class (UMC)
88-96	Lower upper class (LUC)
97-99	Middle upper class (MUC)
00	Upper upper class (UUC)

Typical members of a class:

LLC: Freed slaves, peasants, tinkers, vagabonds, beggars, criminals, low-level thieves and assassins.

MLC: Herdsmen, labourers, pedlars, actors, jugglers, men-at-arms, low-level barbarians, thieves, high-level assassins, low-level bards, low-level jesters.

ULC: Freemen, tradesmen, petty officers, money-changers, mountebanks, fences, low-level fighters, high-level thieves.

LMC: Artisans, craftsmen, petty merchants, junior officers, bankers, landless knights, druids, rangers, low-level mystics.

MMC: Landed gentry, merchants, petty officials, senior officers, landless petty nobles, fighters, low-level magic users and low-level illusionists.

UMC: Guild masters, great merchants, military commanders, officials, landless nobles, lesser clerics, high-level fighters, mid-level magic users and illusionists, low-level savants.

LUC: Great landed gentry, generals and marshals, greater officials, knights, clerics, paladins, cavaliers, high-level magic users and illusionists.

MUC: Knights, commanders, great clerics, nobles, high-level paladins, very high-level magic users and illusionists.

UUC: Great nobles, sovereign nobility, royalty.

The various occupations and status positions can be adjusted as required. Clearly, there will be considerable overlap between the classes as outlined above. The positioning of non-humans is entirely dependent upon the individual milieu, but as a general rule, humankind would most probably place the non-humans as follows:

Dwarves — MMC (they are reputed to have gold and gems!)
Elves — ULC (wood elves) to LUC (grey elves)
Gnomes — ULC to LMC
Halflings — ULC (they are small and rustic)
Half-Elves — slightly above a human counterpart
Half-Orcs — LLC

Birth Table for Humans

Die Roll	Order of birth
01-05	Only child
06-10	1st child
11-20	2nd child
21-35	3rd child
36-50	4th child
51-65	5th child
66-80	6th child
81-85	7th child
86-90	8th child
91-94	9th child
95-97	10th child
98-99	11th child
00	12th child

Parents' Marital State

Dice Roll	Marital state
01-80	Parents legally married
81-00	Parents unmarried — an illegitimate child is typically one class lower than the status of the senior parent

Non-human Birth Tables

Dwarves — Use human tables, -15 on dice rolls.
Elves — Use human tables with the following modifiers:
- Sylvan: -10 on dice rolls
- Drow: -15
- High: -20
- Grey: -30
- All others: -15

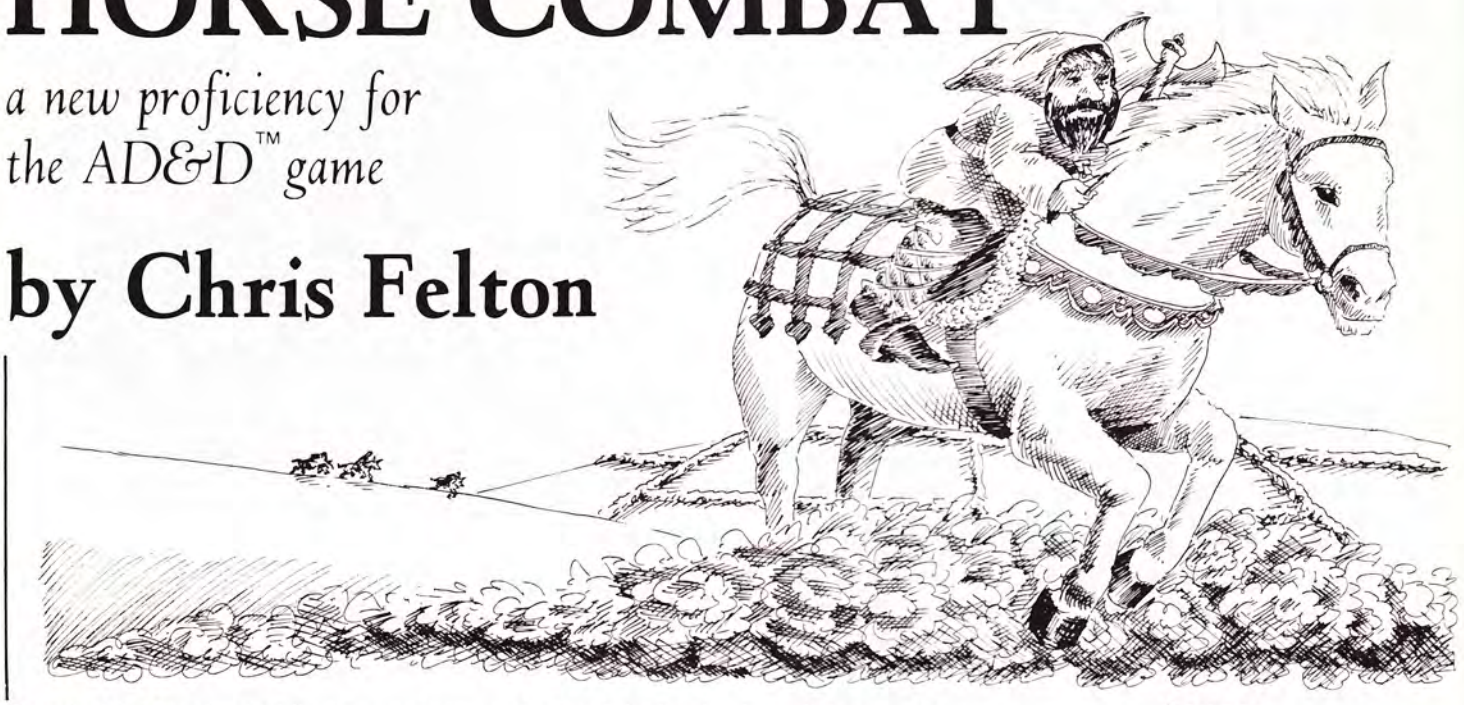
Gnomes — Use human tables, -20 on dice rolls
Halflings — Use human tables, -10 on dice rolls
Half-Elves — Use human tables, -10 on dice rolls
Half Orcs — Use human tables, +10 on Birth Table, +75 on Marital State

Other pertinent data should be developed by the DM as needed for the particular campaign. Any character must have, at the least, a social status of but one rank below that of his or her profession. Note, therefore, that any individual character born to the Lower Lower class (LLC) can only be a thief or assassin at the beginning of his or her career.

HORSE COMBAT

a new proficiency for the AD&D™ game

by Chris Felton



Now that the cavalier is riding around the battlefields, lance in hand, dealing mighty blows to the foe, the other characters must be looking at their colleague with some jealousy. Are they to remain on foot, down with the orcs and the other nasties?

Not necessarily. This article introduces the idea of a new proficiency, Horse Combat, available to all fighters, paladins, rangers and clerics of any level, and to barbarians and assassins of fifth level and above. It replaces a normal weapon proficiency for characters of all these classes, except the cavalier, and requires both Strength and Dexterity to be 12 or greater. Cavaliers automatically have Horse Combat proficiency at first level, along with Lance. Horse Combat is also one of the proficiencies in which a Cavalier may take specialization. This is in addition to the specializations already allowed for in the description of that class.

The proficiency allows the character to fight from the back of a warhorse, without a shield, using a one-handed weapon. The proficiency may be gained by fighters and clerics of first level, and by barbarians and assassins at fifth level, and is improved with each rise in level after the proficiency is gained. Thus, if a fighter becomes proficient in Horse Combat at first level, she or he will have a 3rd level proficiency in Horse Combat on reaching 3rd level, while an assassin could not achieve this level of proficiency before reaching the 7th level of experience.

At the 3rd level of proficiency (two level rises after the proficiency was first taken), the character can choose to sit still on a fighting warhorse, or fight with a one-handed weapon and a shield (or cast a spell) from a standing warhorse ('standing' meaning that the horse can dodge blows or walk, but not fight, trot or gallop).

At the 5th level of proficiency, the character can use a one-handed weapon, without a shield, from the back of a fighting warhorse.

At the 7th level of proficiency, the character can fight with both weapon and shield, or spellcast, from the back of a fighting warhorse. However, to cast a spell successfully from a fighting horse, the character must roll under Dexterity on a d20 for each segment of casting time, or the spell is ruined.

Proficient characters on horseback are at +2 'to hit' opponents on the ground. Specialization in Horse Combat improves the bonus 'to hit' to +4. Their armour class to attackers on the ground is improved by 2 if the horse is standing, and by 4 if it is fighting. These adjustments only apply to opponents on the ground. Mounted opponents are not affected, except that when a horse is fighting, the rider's armour class is improved by 2 against mounted opponents. If two horses are fighting, their riders cannot fight each other — they can't reach.

A mounted charge takes two full rounds to work up, and two more rounds to stop — voluntarily at least.

Only one-handed weapons can be used from horseback (the horse's head gets in the way of larger weapons), with the exception of shortbows and crossbows, neither of which can be fired or reloaded from a fighting, trotting or galloping horse. A heavy crossbow can be fired from horseback, but not reloaded. When charging a target, a rider with Horse Combat proficiency is at +4 to hit, while a character without it is at -3. A charge takes two full rounds to work up, and two more to stop — voluntarily, at least.

Lances

If using a lance, characters hitting an opponent must roll under the average of their Strength and Dexterity (rounded down) on d20, at -6. When taking a lance hit, characters make the same roll at +2, and when characters both hit and are hit in the same round, the roll must be made at +4. If the character does not have Horse Combat proficiency, 6 must be added to the roll, cumulative with the other modifier. If this 'saving throw' fails, the character is unhorsed and takes 1d6 points of falling damage. Lance charges always beat every other weapon on initiative due to weapon-length, except for a pike, or a sharpened tree in the hands of a giant or two....

Lances may be used by any fighter (including sub-classes), assassin or barbarian, but non-proficiency penalties must be taken into account for both Lance and Horse Combat. If the character has neither, both penalties are doubled, so the character is at -8. If this non-proficient character was also charging, the -3 penalty for that would apply in addition. In the unlikely event of a hit still being made, the double damage charge bonus would still apply.

A saving throw vs Crushing Blow must be made (requires a 10) on each hit, at -2 per hit after the first, due to cumulative weakening.

Horses

There are three types of horse available; light riding horses, as in the **Players Handbook**, which will panic under abnormal stimuli (presence of monsters, fights, etc), cavalry horses (as the **PHB** warhorses, light medium and heavy, trained to stand still while the rider fights, or to fight no matter what the rider is doing, according to command, and unlikely to panic in the same way as a riding horse would), and the very rare full warhorse (see next column).

Whenever such a horse encounters a situation it does not like, it has a chance of bolting. As an alternative to the percentage chances of this given in the **Monster Manual**, you might like to try the following. To avoid having the horse bolt, the rider must make a saving throw of 17+ on d20, modified by:

+2 per 5 points total Str/Dex of rider
+1 per point of the horse's stability
+3 for Horse Combat proficiency
+1 for teamster/freighter secondary skill
-2 if there's a fight nearby, or if it smells a normal carnivore
-4 if there is a fabulous beast visible or it sees a large carnivore
-6 if in the middle of a fight, or if it is already bolting
-8 if there is a large monster (such as a dragon) nearby
-10 if struck by missiles, spells, or (if not a cavalry or war horse) hand weapons
-12 if the rider is fighting a large monster

The stability of the horse should be determined secretly by the DM when the horse is obtained. Normal riding horses have a stability of 1-6, cavalry horses 6-9 (d4+5), and full warhorses are always stability 10.

If the horse bolts the rider may fall off. The chance is decided by Strength, Dexterity, and a saving throw on a d20:

Str + Dex Total	Saving Throw
6-10	14
11-15	13
16-20	12
21-25	11
26-30	10
31-35	9
36-40*	8
41-45*	7
46 (ie 18/00 + 18)*	6

* For each ten points of exceptional strength, add one point to the Str/Dex total.

The saving throw for characters with Horse Combat proficiency is at +4, and a character with Horse Combat specialization is at +6. If cavaliers fail this roll, they still have their special 85% + 1% per level chance of staying on board.

Chris Felton

New Monster (unofficial)

Full Warhorse

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*
No APPEARING: *1*
ARMOUR CLASS: *7*
MOVE: *15"*
HIT DICE: *5+3*
% IN LAIR: *Nil*
TREASURE TYPE: *Nil*
No of ATTACKS: *3*
DAMAGE: *1-10/1-10/1-4*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Nil*
SPECIAL DEFENCES: *Nil*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Nil*
INTELLIGENCE: *Animal*
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*
SIZE: *L*
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*
Attack/Defence Modes: *Nil*
LEVEL/XP VALUE:
IV/150 + 6 per hit point

The full warhorse is the natural mount of the mounted fighter — though very few ever have the chance to own one. They are the result of the finest stock selection and breeding between ordinary heavy horses, so rare that barely one foal in five hundred bred in such a way will be a young full warhorse. Very few horse-breeders have acquired the skill and knowledge to improve on those odds, and such men and women become very rich indeed, serving great princes and kings. There are those who sell these powerful mounts to anyone who has the requisite influence and wealth to obtain one. The price of a full warhorse obtained in such a way is never less than 1500gp, and can be more in times of war or civil unrest.

In addition, the warhorse must then be trained to work with its new owner. This takes at least six weeks of intensive work, and again, the opportunities are very rare. Most trainers capable of such work are already in the service of wealthy masters, and the few prepared to be hired for such work will demand 1800gp for a six week 'course'.

Once trained, the full warhorse will recognize only one rider. It will resist anyone who attempts to mount it, lead it away or whatever, even if it recognizes the person as a friend of its owner.

In practice, most player characters who manage to obtain one of these steeds will be cavaliers who perform some great service to their patron — provided the patron can afford the price, or have a stockbreeder on their staff. Training might be included in the reward. Often, a cavalier can be persuaded to accept a full warhorse, fully trained, in exchange for a reward or a 'gift' of twice the value. If an opportunity occurs, a cavalier should be prepared to do almost anything to obtain one.

When its owner dies, a surviving full warhorse can only be retrained 10% of the time. There is a further 15% chance that it will go wild, attacking all creatures it meets, until its inevitable demise. In the remaining 75% of cases, the warhorse merely lapses into the deepest despair, dying 1-8 days after the loss of its rider. Similar risks are run when an owner voluntarily abandons a warhorse for any period longer than a month. In such circumstances there is a 50% chance per month that the horse will pine away.

A cavalier who wishes to pass on his full warhorse, or to sell it, will find its loyalty a hindrance. Most knowledgeable horse-dealers will pay only a fraction of the price (150gp). Warhorses can only be retrained in 25% of cases, and both buyer and seller must be involved in the process, which will take 10 weeks. A trainer will be required as well, at a cost of 4000gp, the money being due regardless of whether or not the retraining is successful.

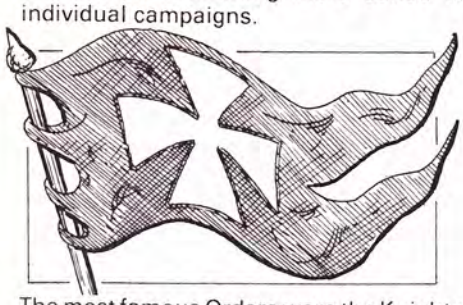
Orders of the Day

Chivalric Orders in the Medieval Period

by Carole Morris

We familiarly use the term 'order' when referring to the organisation of the Church, and especially with regard to monastic society. The latter was divided into groups of monasteries following a common set of rules, organised into orders such as Benedictine, Cistercian, Cluniac etc. The rise of monastic organisations, and the additional incentive of the Crusades in the Holy Land from the 11th to the 13th centuries, led to the foundation of several orders of Knights. These were both religious and military, and fought to establish the supremacy of the Christian cause against Islam and the Moslem world, first in the Holy Lands, and later against the Moors in Spain.

Any GMs who now intend to feature the cavalier sub-class in their campaign need to consider how these Orders can be represented. Most campaigns have a pseudo Western European feel about them, and thus the cavalier will be a representation of the Knights of the medieval period, men who followed a binding code of chivalry, and who were, in many cases, followers of varying Orders of Knights, with loyalties transcending national boundaries and allegiances. This article will look at the most powerful of these Orders — but many smaller ones existed, and research or imagination may well create something more suited to individual campaigns.



The most famous Orders were the Knights Hospitaller (or Knights of St John), the Knights Templar, and the Teutonic Knights. All three fought in Palestine. Lesser Orders, such as the Alcantara, Calatrava and the Santiago, fought in the later wars in Spain. All the military orders grew to be extremely rich, and had lands and revenues in most countries of western Europe — some spread even further. Their power was greater than that of some kingdoms, so much so that many were to end their days at the hands of jealous or fearful monarchs. From humble and single-minded organisations, they grew to be powerful, political forces.

The Knights Hospitaller

The origins of the Hospitallers lay in the desire of many devout Christians to journey to the Holy Land and Jerusalem. The journey was hard, and many fell ill and died on the way. The same was true of many of those who travelled to the Middle East to trade. In particular, the city of Amalfi, in southern Italy, had commercial links with colonies in Palestine, and it was through the agency of some merchants of that city, that land and a Church dedicated to St John came to be purchased near the Holy Sepulchre. In 1055 a hospital was founded there for the care of visiting pilgrims, and this in turn lead to the foundation of the Hospitallers Order, religious brothers who tended the sick, and Knights to protect them. Since they were under the 'patronage' of St John, they also became known as the Knights of St John, or Johannites.

In the 11th century, the Order made its base in Jerusalem, changing its character when the Crusaders gained control of Palestine. The hospitallers became subordinate to the knights, who expanded their role to take on the defence of the Holy Places, and the Kingdom of Jerusalem. The Knights established fortresses along the borders of the Holy Land and began to recruit knights from all over north-western Europe. Vast grants of estates and income from devout monarchs enabled the Knights to build castles, such as the Krak des Chevaliers in the north of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, which held out against Saladin in 1188, yielding only after a long struggle. When the Christians returned to Palestine, the Order became a very powerful force, subordinate only to the Pope, and owing no allegiance to kings or princes. Their intransigence lead to many breakdowns of discipline in the Christian forces, and lead to unnecessary defeats for the Crusader forces.

In the 13th century, the Knights Hospitaller built their most powerful centre at Acre, where they built up a veritable palace with halls, a church, hospital etc. The Knights' Hall in this castle still survives today. The Order continued to expand, acquiring lands in Cyprus, and thus, when the Crusaders were expelled from the Holy Land for the last time, in the late 13th century (Acre being the last stronghold to fall), their power base was not lost. They moved to the island of Rhodes, where their centre remained until it was conquered by the Turks in 1522. During this period, the Order lost most of its religious functions, and the Knights became almost entirely military in nature. In 1530 the Order moved to Malta, whereupon the Cross of St John, a white cross on a black background, came to be known as the Maltese Cross. Thrown far from the lands that had been the reason for their existence, the Hospitallers gradually declined, their days of power and influence passed for good. The St John's Ambulance Brigade, in the late 20th century, are the current bearers of the Maltese cross, an inheritance that stretches back 900 years.

The Knights Templar

The Templar Order was founded in Jerusalem in 1119 by a knight from Champagne, France, one Hugh de Payns. He had become dissatisfied with the Hospitaller order, and decided to found a new order that would combine ascetic monastic traditions with military chivalry. Their emblem was the famous red cross on a white background. Initially the Order was very poor, until, in 1128, Hugh requested that Abbot Bernard of Clairvaux should write a code, or set of rules, by which the Order would be governed, based on Cistercian ideals. It was then recognized by the Pope, and grew rapidly. Bernard wanted the Knights to devote themselves to chivalry, holy war and monasticism, but the monastic virtue of penury was soon forgotten as the Order acquired large estates in western Europe. Their vast incomes allowed the Templars to match the Hospitallers in the building of castles, and support a standing army.

By the late 12th century, the Order had also developed a speciality in banking, helping traders and others to transfer money from Europe to Palestine. They built large castles to protect their vast treasuries in important centres like Paris and London, acting almost like a modern commercial bank.

They also developed a reputation for being military fanatics in the Holy Land, causing the Kings and leaders of more orthodox armies at least as much embarrassment as the ill-disciplined Hospitallers, and adding to the divisions of the Christian cause.

In 1219 they built a large castle at Château Pèlerin (Palestine), with its own harbour, which became their centre in the Holy Land. They also owned the harbour at Acre. These were lost, of course, at the end of the 13th century, when the Mamelukes conquered Château Pèlerin. The Templars moved their base back to Europe, establishing their centre in Paris. Because of their vast wealth, the Order swiftly attracted the jealousy of the French throne, which feared that the Templars might attempt to sieze power through their powerful armed might. Thus, unlike the Hospitallers on Malta, far from the mainstream of European politics, the Templars were doomed. Their holdings in England came under threat when Edward — Prince of Wales and later Edward I — took £10,000 from the London Temple.

Then, in 1308, Philip IV of France arrested the whole Order based in France, siezing their assets, and accusing them of witchcraft. This may have been founded on some truth, since the Grand Master, James de Molay, and other Templars do seem to have dabbled in occult practices. Four years later, the Pope sealed the fate of the Order by formally abolishing it, and transferring all of the Templars' possessions to the Hospitallers (although much of their tangible wealth ended up in royal vaults). Molay had been fighting the accusations since 1306, but the Pope, fearful of the stigma attached to the heresies of which Molay stood accused, issued a bull *Vox de caelo* in 1311, and condemned him and the whole Order. Even after this was ratified by the Council of Vienne in 1312, he continued to protest his innocence. He went to his death, burnt at the stake, in 1314, refusing to confess. The destruction of the Templars marks the end of the era of Christianity's attempt to spread the faith through military conquest and crusade. Henceforth the heathen were to be converted by missionary workers.

The Templars' influence is shown today by the number of places that bear names associated with the Order. In England, for example, there are the Temple in London, Templecombe, Temple Cloud, Temple Newsam and others. The current best-seller by Henry Lincoln and others, **The Holy Blood and The Holy Grail**, puts the case that the Order still survives, secret and covert, using the remains of its fabulous wealth to finance a dream, by which the Templars will arise, Phoenix-like, to reclaim the influence they enjoyed in earlier, grander days.

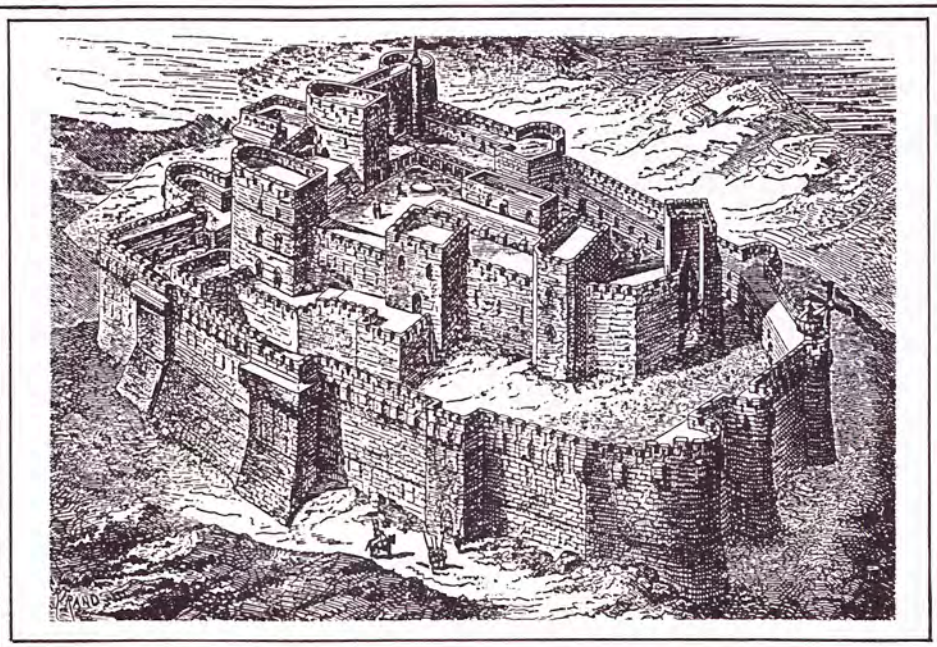
Teutonic Knights

After the success in Spain and failure in the Holy Land, the final arena of attempted Christian conquest came in eastern Europe, where a number of Orders came into being. The Order of Teutonic Knights was founded in 1198 by a Thuringian called Hermann of Salza. It was originally intended to be a brotherhood of German crusader knights, distinct from the Hospitallers and Templars, and its chosen patron was St Mary the Virgin.

The Order was not as successful in the Holy Land as the others, although it had a castle at Montfort in Galilee, and was responsible for the defence of the region to the NE of the capital at Acre. However, after fusing with the Knights of the Swords, which brought the Order under the strict control of the Papacy, the Teutons were the main agency that brought the Gospels to the Prussians, Finns, Esthonians and Lithuanians.

Intending to spread Catholicism to Hungary and Livonia, the Order was defeated by Alexander Nevski at Lake Peipus in 1243, and was forced onto the defensive. When the Barbars conquered their remaining castle in the Holy Land, in 1268, the Teutons moved their activities back to Europe, and became a powerful influence throughout the 14th century. As their strength dwindled, they lost territory, and were finally reduced to the stronghold of Königsberg in East Prussia.

If the cavaliers in your campaign are part of an Order, the history of the fighting orders of the medieval period provide many ideas that can easily be introduced. Above all they should be aloof, separate, and utterly dedicated to their mission. Monarchs will distrust them, generals will be wary of their presence upon the battlefield — and the religious leaders will seek to encourage their spirit of sacrifice to further their own ends.



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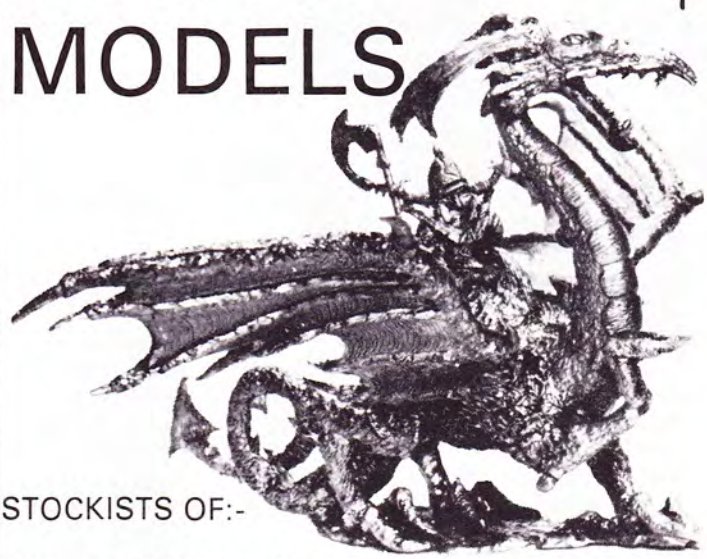

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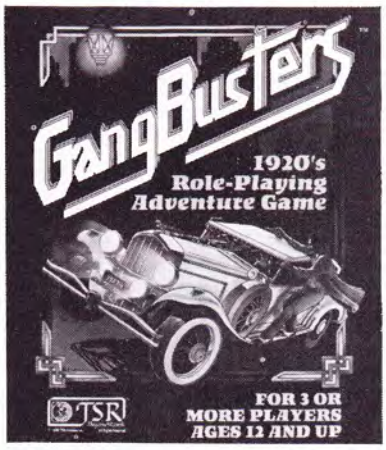

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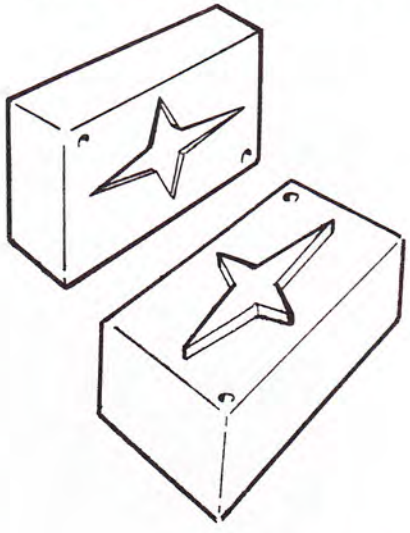

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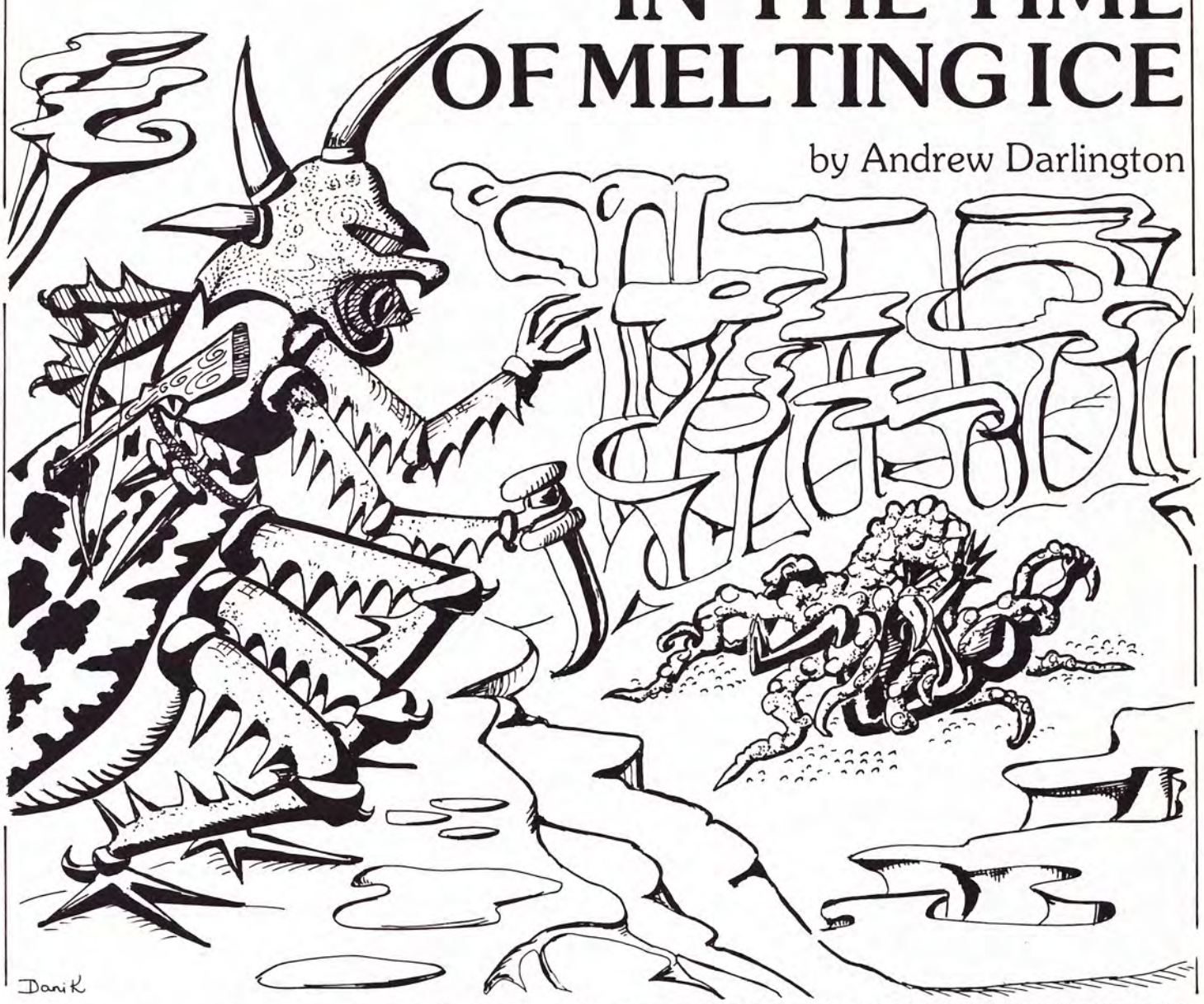
IN THE TIME OF MELTING ICE

by Andrew Darlington



The ice was melting across the narrow strait. It was much as had been anticipated; only the rapidity of the process exceeded expectations. Vaseer reigned in his mount and climbed from the high saddle, enjoying the tactile sensuality of the beaten and worn leather. The ground beneath his feet was spongy with moisture, hoar frost and light snow remaining in patterns, lapping at formations of moss and fern. The beast's breath condensed in silver eruptions, before dissolving into the brittle, windless air.

Vaseer paused to look across the inland sea; at its occasional inlets and rocky fjords blurred by smudges of mist; at its periphery of treacherous ice prohibiting navigation for a further month; at the steady phalanx of huge mushroom-like trees and scattered ruins from forgotten cities stretching down to the lower slopes of the shores.

From his vantage point on the rocky outcrop, Vaseer was able to observe for long, uninterrupted moments. Far above and behind him towered unassailable mountain peaks, and beyond them, the shabby sky islands, buoyed up on their helium bladders, admitting sharply angled shafts of greenish light supporting the entire wilderness of sky-like columns.

It was difficult to accept that his was a military assignment. That, as soon as it became navigable, the narrow neck of water connecting the inland sea to the ocean beyond, would provide the access point for barbarian longships, carrying hordes who would just as surely smash the civilisation that had despatched him. The long winter had provided a wall of ice against further hostile encroachment, but the season had not been long enough. Vessalia, crowded out with refugees in a ring of shanty-town encampments, was still neither sufficiently fortified nor militarily prepared to withstand the imminent waves of invaders. It would be taken, as had the cities which had fallen the previous year. The outcome seemed unavoidable, the whole northern formation of cities, of which only Vessalia remained, lost in violent and bloody extinction.

Vaseer was reluctant to undertake the return journey. He sat still, overlooking the sparkling expanse of water as his beast cropped restlessly at tundra, and the crystal sphere absorbed light on the nearby cairn of shingle. Vaseer enjoyed the stillness and the solitude; enjoyed the short-lived sense of adventure. It was his first real mission, the furthest he had ever ventured alone beyond the city of his birth — although as a child he had sailed the inland sea beside his father in merchant trading vessels with full tattooed sails of rich maroon. Then the lanes had still been open, free cities and peaceful tribes had existed beyond the strait.

It was only as he rose from such introspection that he became aware of the sounds of struggle. He examined the sound, attempting to extract as much meaning from it as possible. He was lightly armoured, a crossbow and quiver slung across his back, a set of jewelled blades of varying widths and lengths attached to his waist-band. His visor was carved into a baroque animal skull, with intricate encrustations. The rituals of drill and briefing were well-instilled. His mission was one of survey; to journey to the strait and to transmit reports of the stage reached in the disintegration of the ice barrier. But the harsh, jagged sound of the struggle was tantalising.

Vaseer was methodical. He moved towards the cairn. As he did so a sky island shifted by gradual, meandering degrees to eclipse the diffused light of the suns, nudging the whole scene towards the green end of the spectrum. The crystal sphere, as he reached it, was a murky vortex of white hues. When first deposited there barely hours ago, taken from the depths of his beast's panniers, it had been blacker than the darkest ebony. Since then, it had gradually absorbed every detail of the panorama, feeding it back to the Sleepers of Vessalia, who had, in turn, translated the information into detailed military topography. The sphere had deepened and complexified in proportion to the light it had drunk until, sated, it had become a uniform white. Carefully, Vaseer picked the crystal up, covered it, and returned it safely to his baggage.

Only then did he leave the huge, crouching creature, to leap down the narrow scree of glacial detritus in the direction of the conflict. The air was freezing, unmoving, carrying each sound perfectly. He used outcrops of rock, eroded by ice and pitted by weather, and the numerous ruins of ancient masonry, as cover, hoping to sneak a glimpse of the struggle without the necessity of becoming involved in it. Nevertheless, he drew a wide, curving blade and held it loosely before him. Below the slope was a narrow, richly-vegetated cleft, running the length of a water-course that would eventually empty into the bay, the stream swollen and rapid with melting snow from the mountain peaks. He used the foliage and undergrowth to his advantage, circling the point from which the sound emanated, carefully avoiding shoals of multi-coloured air-fish weaving languidly in and out of the denser tangles of plants, and around the thick, rubbery trunks of many-layered, fungoid trees. Although harmless, the sudden activity of scores of startled fish could betray his presence to the as yet unseen combatants.

Eventually, Vaseer skirted a low wall of overgrown sandstone to where he could look down the defile. The stream twisted lazily to form an enclosed dell. Vaseer's eyes rapidly adapted to the deep, green shadows, until he could discern the odd shapes of the protagonists.

The first he recognised as a Crawler, a slow-moving land octopus. Although a large and formidable assailant, it was not difficult to avoid and out-distance once its habits were known. Its victim, then, must be a stranger to the area, and, indeed, Vaseer found it difficult to identify the struggling animal. Unlike Vaseer, it had only four limbs, and was covered in some form of shell or silvery armour. The Vessalian scout watched the struggle absently, his interest waning. The climax was predetermined, the four-limbed creature was as good as dead already, its bulky body entwined inescapably in tentacles, all but one of its limbs encircled and captive.

Yet Vaseer watched. The complexity of the victim's shell began to interest him. Its idiosyncracies seemed to indicate artificiality, intimating that the animal could be sentient. Without any clearly defined reason for doing so, the observer unhitched his crossbow, notched a quarrel into its breech, and levelled the weapon. Before the first bolt impaled the Crawler's eye, a second was on the way, and a third. The Octopoid recoiled, its tendrils thrashing the air impotently. The attack was precise and economical — the third missile killed the monster. Yet Vaseer waited a full five minutes as the air-fish settled, as the giant tentacles ceased their muscular spasms, and he was sure of death. Only then did he move warily down into the dell to retrieve his quarrels, cutting them from the monstrous corpse with a blade selected from his waistband.

At intervals Vaseer glanced to where the armoured figure whose life he'd saved lay among the long dew-damp grass. It, in turn, was regarding him. It appeared to be either damaged or in shock. There were no signs of respiration and no sound, though Vaseer was unsure how much of this was due to the muffling effect of the seamless shell.

With the bolts safely returned to his quiver and the crossbow slung over his back, Vaseer hesitated. Already land-crabs were gathering around the immense corpse, and in minutes the entire dell would be filled with such carrion. Vaseer had saved a life, he owed it nothing more. He turned and began to leave, but then the creature spoke. Its words were slurred, strangely enunciated, and in a foreign tongue.

Vaseer shrugged to indicate incomprehension. The stranger was following him. Vaseer turned. The figure was ungainly and shambling, and beyond its shoulder he could see the corpse of the Crawler infested with scurrying flesh-tearing carrion, shoals of air-fish weaving and bobbing about them curiously.

The figure tried another tongue, one that Vaseer recognised as the gutteral language of the barbarians. Suspiciously he felt for his duelling blade. The stranger did not resemble the invaders, but the horde of diverse tribes making up the army was known to include numbers of mercenaries and mutant clans from the Acid-mist Badlands.

Then the figure began to speak haltingly in the Vessalian dialect. Vaseer listened; the phrasing and pronunciation was odd, some of the meaning was garbled and lost, but coherency began to emerge at length.

They reached the crest of the scree overlooking the inland sea and the strait, where Vaseer's beast was still cropping contentedly at ferns. Overhead the drifting sky islands shafted the scene with velvet green pillars of fading dusk light, while drifting manta-rays basked in the ebb and flow of thermals.

Vaseer detached the crystal sphere from the panniers and set it on the cairn. For a moment he watched the regurgitation of dreams in its confined horizons as it absorbed and sifted the miasma of the Vessalian Sleepers. Clouds of vermilion moths swarmed and clustered across the fish-eye of the sphere, splintering and separating out into spectral patterns at either end of its curvature. He was aware of the stranger watching him. Watching the sphere. It would take a while for the crystal to absorb the creature's appearance, for the Sleepers to sift and order the visual information and to return instructions for Vaseer to follow. In the meantime he sat back, relaxed, and watched the stranger beyond the gathering dusk.

'My name is Lester Gomez, I'm from the Second Terran Federation,' it was saying. 'Part of the re-exploration programme covering this sector of space. We've been orbiting here for about three years, recording the ebb and flow of civilisation, watching through the sky islands and insect belts, but so far we've avoided direct contact. I guess that's all over now — that phase ended the moment you fired that weapon to free me from the Monster.'

Vaseer half enjoyed the fantasies. He knew nothing of the stars, or the worlds of

The climax was predetermined; the four-limbed creature was as good as dead already.

space that the stranger spoke of, but was vaguely aware of the legacy of myth left from his planet's previous cultures. He returned information lazily, spoke in a desultory but guarded fashion of his mission, of the crisis threatening Vessalia, the barbarian hordes soon to pass through the narrow ice-fringed waters.

Gomez stood up, strode back and forth in the clumsy and dwarfish fashion Vaseer had come to recognise. 'We've noted the re-emergence of culture on your planet, the crescent of cities; and watched the barbarian movement with some dismay. We know only Vessalia remains.... we'd have helped you but felt it more important to remain uninvolved, so you didn't discover the secret of our return to your system. But I guess that's over now. I owe you my life, I'm in your debt, and our lives must now be interrelated.' He hunched down before the crystal. 'We are now involved in the future of your city. I must return to the Mothership, but watch as I leave. Watch me, Vaseer.'

The Vessalian scout watched with half-interest as the lumbering stranger disappeared into the night. The vortexing crystal washed the stone bank and its surrounds with pure white light, casting clear-cut symmetrical shadows of the beast and the many-limbed Vessalian. Highlighting the overlap of each chitinous scale on Vaseer's near-spherical body and limning the moist sheen of breath-exhalation droplets on each of his ten double-jointed limbs. The crystal was grumbling, amplifying information from the Sleepers, the collective memory banks, seers, and biological computers of the threatened city.

Beyond, across the night, there were more lights. Then the hum of motors.

'Earth is a plague from beyond the sky islands. From beyond the atmospheric insect belts,' came the voice of the crystal. 'Over a thousand years ago our planet was wealthy, civilised from pole to pole. This is fact, neither myth nor legend. Then the Earth companies came, under the guise of benevolence and superior technology. They established their rival Corporations on our continents, in a small way at first, until they'd insinuated themselves into our entire economic structure, and we became addicted to their ''benevolence''. They exploited people, resources, and culture, for a century....'

Across the inland sea, lights were mounting the sky, hovering and hissing at the darkness. The thought occurred dully to Vaseer that Gomez, the sentient being he'd saved from the Crawler — the Earth person, had returned to its Spacecraft, and was climbing. Was hesitating.

'For a century our people were virtually enslaved, dependent on their gifts. Then the rival Corporations, attempting to outdo each other in rapaciousness, broke into squabbling and warring factions. The war became, according to our terminology, Galactic, and before its end our planet was devastated, and in turn abandoned as Earth's economic empire was destroyed, and retracted inwards to its ravaged home world.'

Vaseer watched the lights hovering over the vastness of the inland sea. It was unmoving, its brilliance transfixing, mesmeric. He turned the stranger's parting words over in his mind. Watched the beam of blue-white light from the craft extend like a jagged finger poking and probing across the fjords and inlets until it located the strait through which the barbarian longships must pass to plunder and sack Vessalia. The sound was strangely high-pitched as, in the light of the alien energy-beam, he watched the strait implode saw mountains shudder and collapse into the boiling sea, blocking the waterway. Gomez had created landslides on both sides of the channel making it permanently unnavigable. Sealing the longships forever beyond.

Its task accomplished, the finger of energy retracted. The lights juddered, then ascended into the starless night sky. Vaseer watched until it was no more.

The crystal blurred and became dumb. Vaseer could feel nothing. Numbly he realised Vessalia was safe from barbarian invasion. He'd unwittingly been instrumental in saving the city. But what of the plague from beyond the sky islands that he'd also been involved in re-introducing to the planet? The strange equilibrium between euphoric joy and dread was too difficult to resolve.

Vaseer folded his limbs beneath him, hooded his eyes, and slept.

Andrew Darlington

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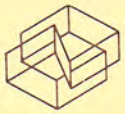

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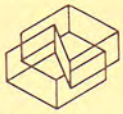

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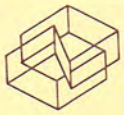

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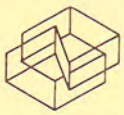

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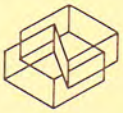

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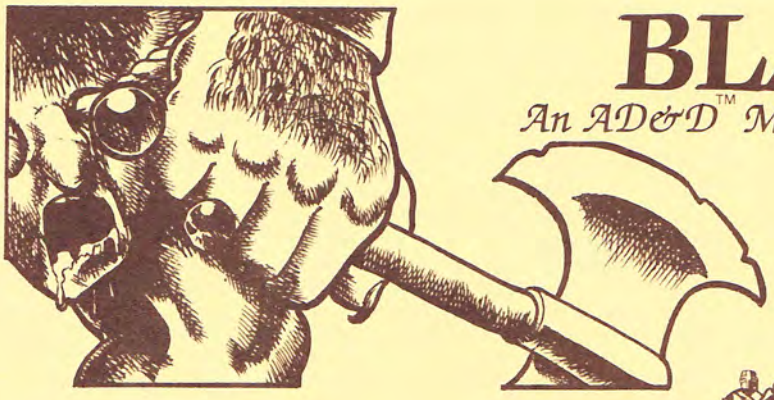
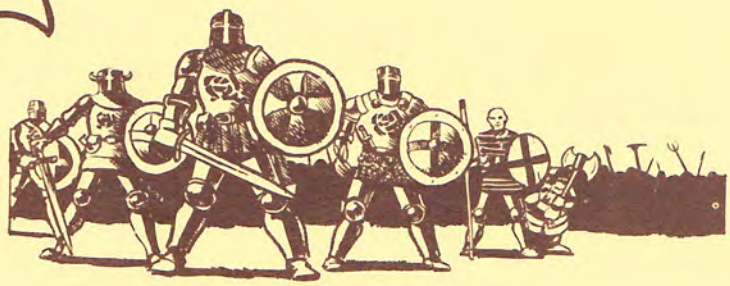


BLACK ROSES

An AD&D™ Mini-scenario for parties of 5-8 adventurers



by Mike Brunton

Introduction

If you wish to play in this scenario please stop reading here. The rest of the information is for the DM alone.

This scenario is intended for use with a party of adventurers which includes cavaliers, the new sub-class of fighter which can be found on pages 6-11 of this issue of IMAGINE™ magazine. It is not a typical 'dungeon' style adventure, because the cavalier class is not suited to such play.

Ideally, the party should include three or four cavaliers, a cleric, a magic-user and other specialist non-fighters. However, the scenario will still work if fighters are substituted for cavaliers.

'Black Roses' is designed so that it may be used with parties of varying levels. The section marked **General Course of Play** describes the adventure, but refers to encounters in general terms, eg the raiders. Exact details of the encounters are given at the end of the scenario. The Dungeon Master (DM) should determine the average level of the characters involved in the adventure and use the details listed under the appropriate level.

Where monsters or Non-Player Characters (NPCs) are described, statistics for them are presented in the following format:

Armour Class (AC); Movement Rate (MV);
Hit Dice (HD) or Class/Level; hit points (hp);
Number of Attacks (# AT); Damage caused by attack(s) (D);
any other notes, eg Special Attacks (SA),
Special Defences (SD), character abilities;
Experience Points (xp); Alignment (AL); Size (S);
Source: MM - Monster Manual, FF - FIEND FOLIO™ Tome,
MM2 - Monster Manual II.

The Order of the Black Rose

The Village of Braeme falls within lands granted to the Black Rose, an order dedicated to the Rule of Law, which sees this duty as defending the Empire of Man. As a result of this policy the Order is now spread around the borders of civilization, pushing back the creatures of the wilderness. The Order is organised into five districts or commanderies, each under the control of a Senior Master. Each district is further subdivided into two or three preceptories — monastery-like establishments where 10-20 cavaliers of the Order live and train with their attendant men-at-arms. Attached to each preceptory are clerics, magic-users, rangers etc who perform specialised supportive tasks in times of crisis. Each preceptory is commanded by a Master of the Order. The entire Order is overseen by a Grand Master and a Council of the Senior Masters.

Players' Background

The DM should read the following at the start of the session:

When summoned to meet Master Christopher in the council hall of the preceptory, you lost no time in obeying. A servant of the Order of the Black Rose, you are trained to show unquestioning obedience to the orders of superiors.

In the hall, Master Christopher sits in his chair, fingering his sword hilt. Beside him stands a bedraggled peasant, obviously nervous in these surroundings. Master Christopher acknowledges your bows and begins to speak:

'Greetings, sirs. This man is Alfric, from the village of Braeme — some twenty miles south of here. The village is part of the Order's lands, and the responsibility of this preceptory.'

Master Christopher gestures to the peasant, who begins to speak in a hesistant and hushed voice.

'Masters. My village is in terrible danger. Fell creatures have come out of the south to threaten our women and children. They said that unless we gave them our harvest they would raze the village to the ground. Poor goodwife Judith's cottage was burnt down as a warning. They said that they would return when next the moon was full. Father Jeffrey — he is our priest, my Masters — told the Elders that the Black Rose Knights would help us. I was sent to beg your aid.'

Alfric wrings his hands and begins weeping. Master Christopher leans forwards and then speaks again:

'We have a duty to this man and his village. They have supported us for ten years, and have never asked for help. Now they need defenders, and I have chosen you for the task. Our Order is much-extended, fighting evil in many places, so I can spare no greater force. Your retinues must remain here in case of further attacks.

'I charge you with the defence of Braeme. You must go to the village and protect it from these foul raiders, whatever they may be. Destroy these enemies of Man, and act with the bravery that becomes a member of this Order. You leave within the hour. Your horses will be saddled and waiting.'

And with that Master Christopher dismisses you all.

Dungeon Master's Background

'Black Roses' is concerned with the defence of Braeme against a group of marauding creatures who have emerged from the wastelands of the south, an area beyond human control. The exact nature of these raiders varies, according to the level of the adventuring characters involved.

The DM should realise that this scenario does not have a conventional structure. There are no descriptions of rooms or monsters in the text. Basically, the DM must take the part of a group of marauders and attack a position held by the party. This calls for fine judgement, because it is always possible to wipe out the defenders entirely. However, this does not mean that the DM should give the party as easy time. Ideally, a level of tension should be maintained during the adventure, with successive (and increasingly desperate) attacks being hurled against the village.

General Course of Play

Once the DM has read the Players' Background to the party, the players may select any equipment they wish from the lists in the **Players Handbook** or from the characters' possessions. Only that which could reasonably be carried on horseback with a man-sized creature can be selected. Each character will be given a horse unless he or she already possesses one, but pack or draft animals may not be used.

Once the equipment is selected, the party can set out to the village of Braeme, guided by Alfric. To conserve the horses' stamina, one night will be spent camping on the trail. The DM may feel free to create an encounter for the night, such as an attack by wolves.

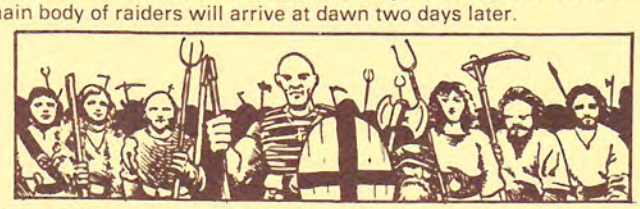
Once at Braeme, the adventurers may take what defensive measures they feel are necessary. In general, the type of defensive work that may be undertaken is of a simple nature. The villagers may be employed as a labour force to dig ditches and implant stakes as anti-cavalry measures, 10 villagers being able to dig a ditch six feet wide two feet deep and 30 feet long with implanted stakes in one day. This will stop any cavalry charge.

The adventurers should realise from their prior military experience as cavaliers (ie the DM should give them hints) that they cannot defend the entire perimeter of the village. Primarily the villagers efforts should be directed towards channelling any assault into 'killing grounds' so that the number of attackers is no longer of great importance.

After 5-8 days the first signs of the raiders will be seen. Two of the raiders, mounted upon whatever type of riding beasts are listed below, will emerge from the forest to the east and approach the village along the track. As soon as the raiders spot any member of the party they will stop, and make off towards the forest. If they escape the raiders will be warned of the presence of the adventurers.

If the raiders are captured, they will give little useful information — general composition of the raiders' group — and vague reasons for attacking human settlements — food, fun, drive away human scum etc.

Regardless of whether the raiders are captured, killed or escape, the main body of raiders will arrive at dawn two days later.



The Villagers

The villagers of Braeme are, with two exceptions, simple non-adventuring folk — poor farmers, but proud of their links with the land.

In the description of the village the inhabitants of each cottage or hovel are not detailed. They are presented as a group for the convenience of DMs whose players use the villagers as aid in the defence of the village.

There are 101 villagers (AC 10; MV 9"; Level 0; hp as below;# AT 1; D by weapon type; AL LN/LG/NG/N) who are capable of taking part in combat. Normally none of the villagers are ever armed, but they have access to various farming implements (D 2-7), axes (D 1-6), knives (the equivalent of daggers, D 1-4), hunting bows (short bows), spears (D 1-6, but the villagers lack the experience necessary to set a spear to receive a charge) and hammers (D 2-5).

The villagers can be split into the following groups:

30 labouring males, 4hp each — only this group has access to hunting bows or spears and can use them effectively;
35 labouring females, 4hp each;
15 active males, 3hp each;
12 active females, 3hp each, -1 combat ability;
4 sedentary males, 1hp each, -2 combat ability — these particular villagers are the Braeme Council of Elders;
5 sedentary females, 1hp each, -3 combat ability.

None of the villagers has had military training, or is particularly brave. Unless they are driven to combat, they will flee 75% of the time. This percentage chance drops by 5% for each member of the party who is within 20 feet, and each time the village is attacked. The DM should check this every turn.

The DM should see the section on 'Typical Inhabitants' on p88 of the **Dungeon Masters Guide** for further details.

There are also 46 children (AC 10; MV 9"; hp 1 each) in the village, but they will take no part in combat whatsoever. However, the party may assign duties involved in the defence to them.

None of the villagers is wealthy. At most the adults will have 1-6cp each, and the children may (30% chance) have a copper piece each.

There are two other inhabitants of the village. The first of these is the village priest, assigned to this out-of-the-way place for holding unconventional views. He is Father Jeffrey (AC 3; MV 9"; C 3; hp 17; # AT 1; D by weapon type; SA +1 to damage; SD spell use, **command, cure light wounds, light, cause fear, hold person, silence 15' radius**; S 16, I 12, W 15, D 9, C 12, Ch 11; AL NG) who wears banded mail and shield in combat and wields a footman's flail. Normally, his spells are those used in ministering to the villagers.

Father Jeffrey is nearly as poor as the villagers (he has 3-18sp). His only valuable possessions are his vestments, which are worth 120gp.

The other exceptional inhabitant of the village is Benbow (AC 3; MV 9"; F 2; hp 20;# AT 1; D by weapon type; SA +1 hit probability, +1 to damage; S 17, I 12, W 9, D 12, C 17, Ch 10; AL N), a dwarf. Benbow was exiled from his people because of alleged cowardice and chose to hide in Braeme rather than adventure in the larger world. Whenever he is called upon to enter combat, there is a 30% chance that Benbow's nerve will break and he will be unable to fight. In combat Benbow wears plate mail and wields a battle axe. He also possesses a pair of matched heavy crossbows with inlaid mother-of-pearl stocks (worth 150gp each), and three **crossbow bolts +1**. In the pouch at his belt are 15gp, 12sp, 4cp and three dead flies, carefully wrapped in a small piece of silk, which Benbow claims to have caught at the same time.

The Village of Braeme

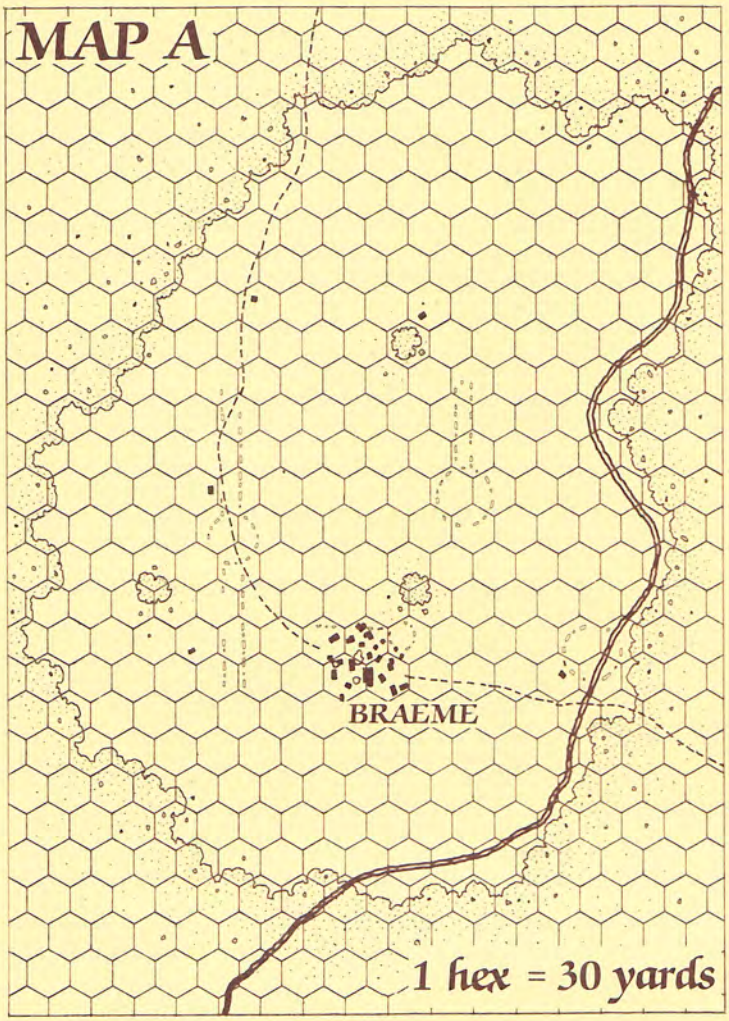
Braeme is located in a fertile vale, which has only come under human rule within the last thirty years. Although Braeme has a frontier postion, and its fields and pastures are bordered by deep forest, the village has no recent experience of violence from the creatures of the wilderness. Only the oldest villagers have any recollection of the creatures that lurk to the south causing trouble.

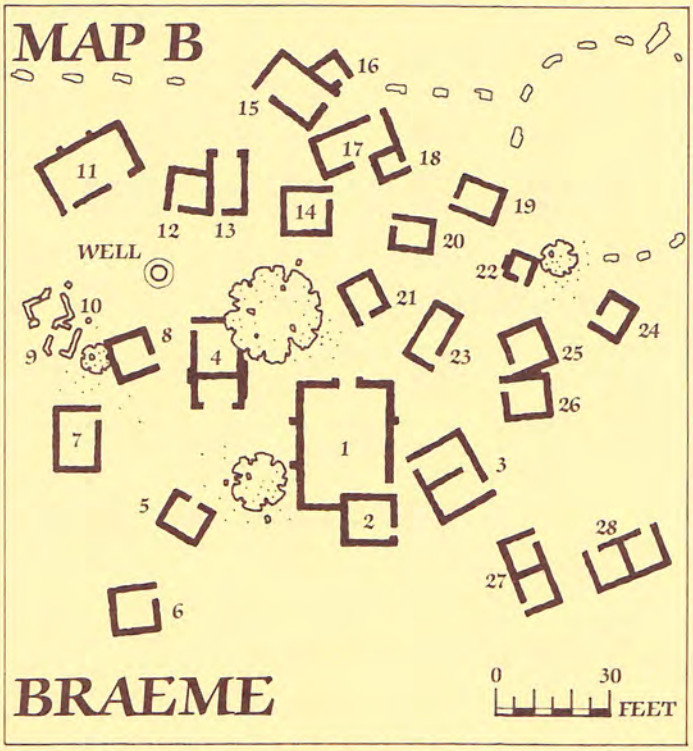
Braeme is an unremarkable place, although it is ringed by the remains of stone circles and avenues, built thousands of years ago. Most have fallen down, been broken or used for building. The partial circle in one corner of the village is the most prominent of these remains.

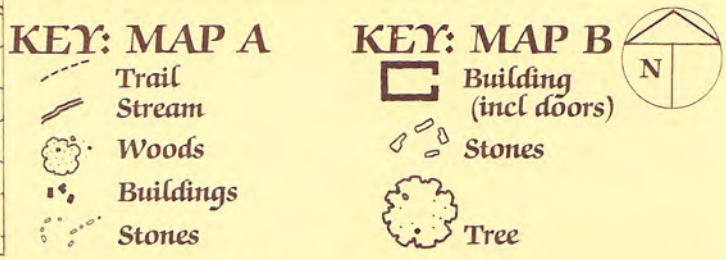
The village is so small that it does not have an inn or tavern. Visitors — a rare occurrence — are entertained at the Priest's House (building 3), or housed in the Temple (building 1). The small cottages and hovels of the village are rude dwellings, constructed, for the most part, of wattle and daub, with one or two stones from the surrounding circles.

The finest buildings are the Temple, the Priest's House and the Smithy (building 4). All three are built of stone, with timber roofs.

No more than a simple hall, the Temple serves as a place of worship, hostelry, council hall and pound for stray animals, furnished with simple wooden benches and brackets for torches. It also has a 40' high tower (2), which was originally intended to take a bell until the Elders decided that it was too expensive. The tower gives an excellent view of the surrounding countryside — and a good field of fire.







The Temple deity should be appropriate to the campaign background.

The Priest's House, where the adventurers will be housed during their stay, is a two room building. It is warm, clean and comfortable, but poorly furnished. Father Jeffrey also uses his house for the important business of storing the village's supply of salt (used for preserving meat during winter). The Smithy is also a two room building. The larger of the two rooms is the forge itself, and the back room is the living quarters for the blacksmith and his family.

Each cottage in the village, regardless of size, looks much like any other, a home to 3-6 adult villagers and 1-3 children (to a total of 101 adults and 46 children). If the players ask for a description the DM should make one up, emphasizing the overcrowded, cramped conditions, the squalor and the damp. Life as a peasant is not easy.

Buildings 9 and 10 no longer exist as complete structures, only heaps of ash and blackened stones. They have been burnt to the ground by the raiders as a warning. The former occupants have been rehoused.

Buildings 11, 13, 15 and 17 are barns. At present they are all but empty, awaiting the fruits of the harvest. These four buildings are the winter food store for the village, and the seed store for the following spring's plantings. The barns and other buildings dotted throughout the surrounding fields and pastures are fodder-stores and winter shelters for cattle and sheep.

Building 22 is the village smoke-house, used during the autumn months for curing meat.

Buildings 27 and 28 are double cottages, constructed entirely of stones from the circles around the village. Father Jeffrey and Benbow built these cottages, with help from the villagers, and intend to rebuild Braeme to the same standard.

The pastures around Braeme are good quality farming land, quite flat and well drained — and entirely suitable for mounted operations.

The DM may give players photocopies of the maps of the area around Braeme (Map A) and the village itself (Map B). IMAGINE™ magazine grants permission to photocopy these maps for personal use.

The Raiders' Strategy

The main body of the raiders will appear from the forest to the north of Braeme at dawn, on the village side of the stream. They will advance in open order across the fields. Once they realise that the village is defended, or if the scouts escaped, a spokesman (listed in the relevant section below) will come forward from the main group, bearing a flag of parley. Once within hailing distance of the village he will shout (in Common) the following:

> 'So, these ungrateful peasants have got help. We should not have been so lenient last time! See, you leave a man a little something because you feel sorry for him and this is how he thanks you.
>
> 'If you surrender now we will let you go with your lives; otherwise you will die. Are these lowly filth worth your lives?'

If the adventurers surrender at this point the raiders will strip them of all their equipment, and escort them to a point some distance from the village, where their equipment will be returned — minus the odd item of jewelry. They will be warned never to return. Were they to do so, they would find their enemies embarking on their first attack.

If they do not surrender the spokesman will begin again:

> 'Now we will kill you all and trample your hovels into the dirt. Your fields will be burnt, your cattle killed. The dust will blow over your unmarked graves.'

After shouting this the spokesman will withdraw to the main body of the raiders, and the first attack will commence.

The first attack will be little more than a test. The raiders will charge forward as a group, in an attempt to reach the village. However, once two casualties have been sustained the raiders will withdraw to the treeline. If followed they will greet their pursuers with a hail of missiles.

The second attack will be more organised, taking place several hours later. The 'cavalry' will ride forward to draw fire, then the bow-armed raiders will concentrate upon any similarly armed defenders. The 'footsoldiers' will be in reserve, carrying burning brands, until a suitable opening presents itself. If an opening is spotted and the 'footsoldiers' reach the village they will burn any hovels within reach. Once the village is fired the remaining raiders ('cavalry' and archers) will move in for the kill. If 25% casualties are sustained the raiders will withdraw.

If the second attack fails, the raiders will again fall back to the treeline and deal with any pursuit in the manner described above. The raiders will then withdraw deeper into the forest until the following day.

Next morning the raiders will adopt a policy of sniping at anybody who appears, in an attempt to goad the adventurers out of the village to where they can be attacked with overwhelming numbers. Assuming that all the cattle and sheep were taken into the village, the raiders will keep to this pattern of attack for two days. At the end of this period their rations will have run out and they will attack again.

This final attack will be an 'all or nothing' affair, with little sophistication. The entire group of raiders will charge towards the village. They will ignore all casualties in their attempts to slay the adventurers and capture Braeme and its food.

If the flow of play makes it practicable the DM may care to have the last raider ask 'Why did you do it, men like you, fighting for scum like these?'

Once the last of the raiders is dead the adventure is effectively ended.

The Raiders

LEVEL 1: 24 xvarts (AC 7; MV 6"; HD 1-1; hp 4 each; # AT 1; D by weapon type; xp 9 each; AL CE; S S; FF) armed with shortswords (D 1-6). Eight of the xvarts are 'cavalry', mounted on giant rats (AC 7; MV 12"; HD $^1/_2$; hp 2 each; # AT 1; D 1-3; SA Disease; xp 9 each; AL N; S S; MM) and armed with spears (D 1-6) as well. Eight of the 'footsoldiers' are armed with shortbows (D 1-6) in addition to their shortswords. They are led by a xvart magic user (AC 7; MV 6"; HD 1-1; hp 6; # AT 1; D 1-4; SA spell use, **magic missile, shocking grasp**; xp 32; AL CE; S S; FF) who is armed with a dagger (D 1-4).

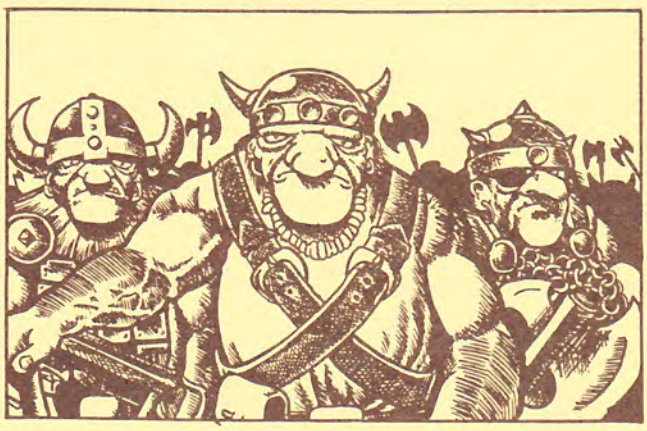
The xvarts are accompanied by Selkin, a wererat (AC 6; MV 12"; HD 3+1; hp 14; # AT 1; D by weapon type; SA surprise on 1-4; SD silver or +1 weapons to hit; xp 206; AL LE; S M; MM) in human form, armed with a longsword (D 1-8). Selkin will do all the talking for the group, and is in apparent command. He will only reveal his true nature if forced to do so in order to flee or survive.

The xvarts have 2-8gp each, the magic user has an inlaid dagger (worth 50gp) and two doses of a **potion of human control**. Selkin's longsword is of high quality (worth 125gp)

LEVEL 2-3: 20 gnolls (AC 5; MV 9"; HD 2; hp 9 each; # AT 1; D by weapon; xp 46 each; AL CE; S L; MM), armed with battle axes (D 1-8).

Six of the gnolls are mounted upon minimal elephants (AC 8; MV 12"; HD 2+6; hp 16; # AT 5; D 2-5/2-5/1-4/1-3/1-3; xp 173; AL N; S special; MM2). Minimal elephants are similar to normal elephants, but are the result of magical dwarfism — they are half normal height (c 8' tall) and 1/8 normal weight.

Four of the gnolls on foot are armed with heavy crossbows (D 1-8) in addition to their battleaxes.



The whole group is led by Earbiter, the raiders' spokesman, a flind (AC 5; MV 12"; HD 2+3; hp 17; # AT 1; D 1-6 or 1-4; SA disarming; xp 86; AL LE; S M; FF), accompanied by a gnoll shaman (identical to the above gnolls plus except HD 3; hp 10; SA spells, **darkness, cure light wounds, chant**; xp 125), who is armed with a **mace +2** (D 1-6+2). Both are mounted upon medium warhorses (AC 7; MV 18"; HD 2+2; hp 12 each; # AT 3; D 1-6/1-6/1-3; xp 71 each; AL N; S L; MM).

Each gnoll has 4-16gp each, and may (50% chance) have an item of booty, such as a gem, piece of jewelry, weapon etc, worth 20-40gp. Earbiter and the shaman have 40-60gp each, but nothing else of value.

LEVEL 4-6: 15 gnolls (identical to those described above, except 12hp and 52xp each), seven mounted upon medium warhorses (identical to those ridden by the flind and gnoll shaman above). All are armed with scimitars (D 1-8). In addition the 'cavalry' have spears (D 1-6) and those on foot have heavy crossbows (D 1-8).

They are accompanied by seven bugbears (AC 5; MV 9"; HD 3+1; hp 16 each; # AT 1; D by weapon type; SA surprise on a 1-3; 199xp each; AL CE; S L; MM) armed with halberds (D 1-10); and three ogres (AC 5; MV 9"; HD 4+1; hp 24 each; # AT 1; D 1-10; xp 210 each; AL CE; S L; MM).

Their leader and spokesman is Kadric, a human magic user (AC 4; MV 12"; Mu 7; hp 22; # AT 1; D by weapon type; SA spell use; S 10, I 16, W 12, D 13, C 10, Ch 14; 1045xp; AL NE; S M) who is mounted upon a medium warhorse (identical to those described above). He is armed with a **dagger +2** (+3 vs paladins), and has the following spells available:

First Level: **charm person, magic missile, shield, sleep**
Second Level: **darkness 15' radius, ESP, stinking cloud**
Third Level: **hold person, slow**
Fourth Level: **wall of ice**

Kadric's only treasure consists of two travelling spell books, each of which can hold up to 6 spells under third level and 4 spells under sixth level. The DM should determine the exact contents of the spell books.

Each gnoll has 5-20gp, each bugbear has 6-36gp and each ogre has 5-50gp. In addition there is a 60% chance that any individual will have an item of value similar to those listed for the gnolls above.

LEVELS 7-9: 24 gnolls (statistics identical to those listed for Levels 4-6), twelve of whom are mounted upon giant lizards (AC 5; MV 15"; HD 3+1; hp 18 each; # AT 1; D 1-8; SA double damage on a '20'; xp 197 each; AL N; S L; MM) and armed with spears and scimitars. The remainder are on foot, armed with heavy crossbows and battleaxes.

They are accompanied by ten bugbears (identical to those above), five ogres (again, identical to those above) and Kadric, a 7th level human magic user (see above for details).

Their spokesman and leader is Talmyn, a spriggan, (AC 3; MV 9"; HD 4; hp 35; # AT 1; D by weapon type; SA spells, thief abilities; 1350xp; AL CE; S S; MM2), who is armed with a **dagger +1**. He can use the following spell-like powers one at a time, one per round: **affect normal fires, assume giant size, scare** at -2 on saving throws due to ugliness, **shatter**. He also has thief abilities equivalent to an 8th level gnome thief with a dexterity of 18. While giant size (AC 5; MV 15"; HD 8+4; hp 35; # AT 2; D 2-8/2-8; S L) Talmyn cannot use any of his abilities.

He is followed everywhere he goes by his younger brother, Lupa (identical statistics, save for 32hp and 1320xp).

Treasure for the raiders is identical to that given for them at lower levels. Talmyn has a **medallion of ESP** (he doesn't know what it is) and a belt of gold links (worth 500gp). Lupa has never been allowed to keep any.

Designer's Notes

By now, you may have realised that this scenario is a bit like a film nearly called 'The Splendid Halfdozen-ish'. You are not mistaken. It's up to you, as DM to decide whether or not the raiders wear big, floppy hats and have Mexican accents. In either case, the film (and the original film **The Seven Samurai**) provides a good guide to the way the adventure should flow. Have fun, and remember, 'only the farmers have won'!

Credits

Design, plagiarism and other things: Mike Brunton
Art: Carl Critchlow
Cartography: Paul Ruiz

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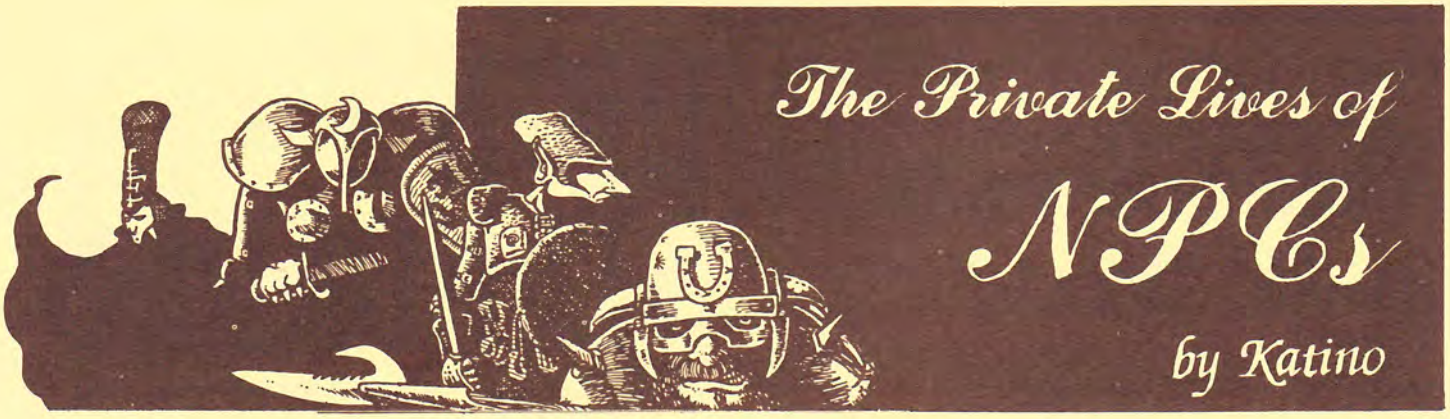

The Private Lives of NPCs

by Katino

Ever wondered what your average monster or NPC does, when not being badly mistreated by groups of adventurers? No? Well, maybe you should. After all, a fantasy world is nothing without a damsel to rescue, a magical artifact to find, or a wicked monster to fight; and it is little better if there is no good reason why she should be rescued, no cataclysm if the artifact is not found, or no dark secret that remains forever evil if the monster is not fought. These are the kind of details that most DMs use to give meaning to an adventure.

But what of the baddies? Why are they bad? Where did they come from? Who are they? So many of them are just a drab collection of statistics in a room description. Details are often omitted entirely. Yet the contribution an interesting opponent can make to an adventure is enormous.

Any campaign or adventure can be made superficially complete by supplying a quest, a suitable collection of monsters and a variety of traps and treasures to make the journey profitable. But if you aim to create a believable world for your players to adventure in, you can't just stop there. If you do, you will miss a great deal (and so will your players), as any good mother-killing orc will tell you. So the point of this article is to try to explain the principles to be followed in creating and using Non-Player Characters. I use these principles for my own **Tunnels & Trolls** adventures, but there is no reason at all why they shouldn't be used in all role-playing games.

Let us start by following a typical group of adventurers through part of an encounter:

Carefully, the four adventurers, Dwarf, Elf, Human Warrior and Human Wizard, rounded a corner, and found that the tunnel became enlarged into the shape of a room, with stairs cut into the opposite wall leading downwards. The only problem was the orc sentry at the top of the stairs. He should have been alert and at attention, but luckily for our group, he was sleepy and stood leaning heavily on his spear. Warily, our heroes approached and surrounded the orc. The warrior drew his sword and gently began to apply pressure with the tip against the enemy's throat.

The orc awoke with a start, eyes darting around at the group which hemmed him in, and coming to rest, finally, on the sword which pressed uncomfortably against his windpipe.

'Speak, fiend, or die,' commanded the warrior....

Let us just stop the action there, and examine the situation. The GM could simply have given the orc a monster rating, and had him attack the group, or allowed them to attack him. A quick die roll, and some more gold and a few experience points are in the bag. But our GM is more subtle than that. He wants the group to role-play the situation, possibly to extract some useful snippet of information from the orc. In tackling any situation involving confrontation, the GM must first of all form a clear picture in his own mind of the entity controlled, ie, the NPC. The following questions could usefully be asked at this stage:

1. How did the NPC get here?
2. Why is he here, rather than at some other location in the dungeon?
3. How does he earn his living?
4. What was he doing an hour ago?
5. Is he alone, or part of a group?
6. Does he have a name? If so, who gave it to him?

There are, of course, many other factors which might be taken into account. Generally speaking, the more questions you ask yourself, the more real the NPC will become. Now, let us follow this reasoning through, by applying it to the NPC described above, and see just what kind of character the orc is.

1. How did he get here? Unless he has always lived (and is possibly about to die) in this dungeon, he must have come from somewhere else. Pretty obvious really, but it suggests that somewhere else exists and should be thought about. It is highly likely that he will have entered the dungeon through a physical entrance. It might have been the same one that the players used, or it might be a different, secret one. If so, has it been included on the dungeon plan? In our example, let's say the orc has entered by a different route. He came from a mountainous region, north of where the adventure takes place.

2. Why is he here, rather than at some other location in the dungeon? This can be the easiest, or the most difficult, question to answer. The reason for a monster or NPC being anywhere must at least stand up to a minimal scrutiny. It is totally inadequate to say that the NPC is here because this is where he keeps his treasure. Why not put his treasure somewhere else? And in any case, if he spends his whole time guarding his ill-gotten gains, when does he eat, and where does his food come from? We will tackle these questions more specifically later, but we are already starting to supply a logical framework for the adventure setting. Our example illustrates this rational basis. This location obviously leads to somewhere, via the stairs. The orc has been positioned here to prevent any unauthorised person descending. Could there be something valuable or secret at the bottom? Otherwise, why post a guard? Perhaps we shall see.

3. How does he earn his living? If he, or it, is a physical entity, he probably needs to eat sometimes. There are basically three ways to achieve this:
a) hunt for, or grow food;
b) have somebody provide it free;
c) buy it.
Most dungeons I know are notoriously light on restaurants, so this probably leaves two alternatives. Indeed, hunting or growing food is a perfectly acceptable full-time occupation for some monsters and NPCs, especially for those monsters who thrive on a diet of adventurers. For those who rely on someone else, they will probably have to earn it in some way, whether as a soldier, spiritual guide, counsellor, entertainer, assassin or whatever. The possibilities are endless.

The orc in the example is one of a troop who have been hired by the villain-in-chief, to protect her and her secret. He gets paid for his services, and probably expects to go home to his northern mountains, or on to a similar job after this one is all over. In the meantime, meals are shared with the other orcs in a hall deeper into the complex.

4. What was he doing an hour ago? It is very important to establish a *modus operandi* for an NPC. It can also be very rewarding and add a fresh element of the unknown for the GM if, for instance, he has established a route, or a series of haunts, for an the NPC and it is possible that he might be found at any point along

the route or at any of his favourite places, depending on how long the players take to get there. Moving an NPC independently of the players involves a little extra work, but it does have its good points. This whole question, however, is really designed to make the GM pause before putting an NPC somewhere and reinforces the reason for it to be somewhere at a given moment.

On the surface, our orc is pretty boring in this respect, as an hour ago he was standing in exactly the same spot thinking that he only had an hour to go till the end of a long watch — hence the sleepiness and lack of attention to events going on around him.

5. Is he alone or part of a group? This question starts to take us outside the immediate situation and suggests other things. If the NPC is a 'loner', so well and good. He is likely to react in a hostile and suspicious manner to any group approaching him, especially if he is an outcast of society for some reason. This might suggest a criminal background and knowledge, through association, of things outside a law-abiding hero's experience — a perfect opportunity to give information. Alternatively, he might be 'friendly', even joining the group for a while. But any adventurers worth their salt are going to want to know a bit about him before they expose their backs to him.

If the NPC is part of a group, then where are the others? Who are they and what are they doing? You may wish to develop other members of his band as well, although this isn't always a good idea. In a military type of group, for instance, give the officer in charge a complete background, as he is the one who will command the others — and is probably most dangerous.

Let us say the orc we encountered is one of a troop of 20 under one officer and an NCO. We have established that he is at the end of a long watch, so he will shortly be relieved by another orc. Moreover, maybe the NCO is doing his rounds and checking all the guard stations (remember the *modus operandi*?) and he is due at this location any minute. Our adventurers had better hurry up and get that information or they might find themselves facing three orcs instead of one.

6. Does he have a name? Perhaps the most important question of all, for if he does, someone gave it to him, which suggests a past life. Again, even if only sketchy, giving an NPC a past will make far more real in the present.

We'll call this orc Durbak, son of Durbaz, an armourer for his tribe in the mountainous regions of the North. But who exactly is Durbaz? What of his tribe? Is there anything more we should know? Ah, these are questions which you, as GM, ought to be able to answer for yourself.

From a simple situation, we have derived a large number of facts about Durbak, the sleepy orc, and his friends; and even more loose hints and tips to suggest possible storylines. We have established something of an atmosphere, a sense of urgency and a reality for a simple orc. All without even the aid of players!

In practice, of course, things work in reverse. The GM starts by establishing all the above in his adventure plan. All the players need to do is to help bring it to life. Which leads to yet another question. How and why are such creations used?

'How' each creature is used is entirely up to the GM, although I will make some suggestions. There can be many 'why's, the most common of which can be classified:

(a) To impart straight or confusing information to the players

(b) To physically or magically aid the players at a particular point

(c) To provide a break from simple monster-bashing

(d) To create an ongoing menace

(e) To introduce a random factor to the story independent of player choices

(f) To give the GM a chance to role-play.

There are many others, of course, each individual to the world in which they appear. But nearly every role-playing adventure needs a 'lift' from time to time and many of the reasons are common.

It can be frustrating, for instance, when a party of players has all the information you felt they needed to solve a particular problem and yet they still can't get it. You want to help them a little more — but you can't without running the risk of killing the suspension of disbelief so vital to a good adventure. Your NPC is tailor-made for such an eventuality and it gives you a chance to really join in.

Look at our example again. There stands Durbak, a sword at his throat, probably quivering in fear. What the GM does and says now, depends largely on who, or what, is at the bottom of the stairs, or how afraid Durbak is of his master. He might try to keep the party talking until the relief squad arrives, or in his fear-crazed babblings give them a vital clue. He could just as easily misdirect them; after all, he might be standing guard against something which comes up the stairs....

The possibilities are endless, but the principle is the same. Let's have some proper 3-dimensional NPCs, as opposed to experience point fodder. Better still, incorporate an xp reward system for 'problem solving and information gathering' in your campaign as well as the more common rewards. All role-playing games extoll the virtues of improving and adapting their rules to suit yourself. So do it! Remember, it's all a question of balance and of providing a sufficiently varied storyline with plenty of alternative possibilities to make each game interesting for you as well as for your players. That is what makes full developed NPCs worthwhile.

Many adventures can be improved enormously in this way. So before you put an NPC anywhere, stop and think: 'What was this NPC doing a week ago? Why and how is he here now? Assuming he survives, what will he be doing in a week's time?'. Then, having made a start, carry on and create living beings. You will probably be surprised at how much you can learn about your own world.

Katino

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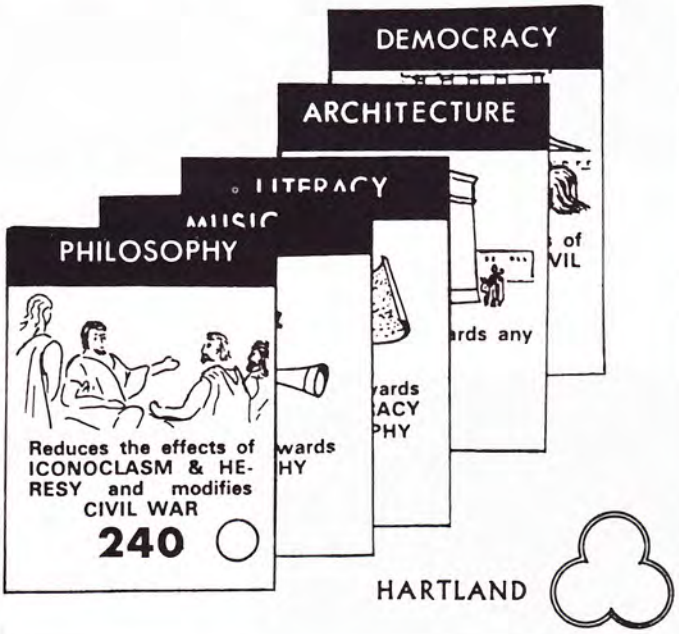

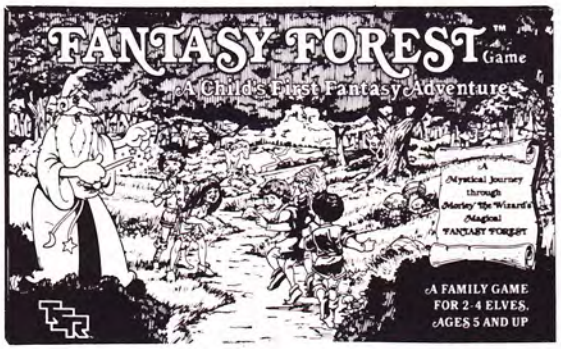

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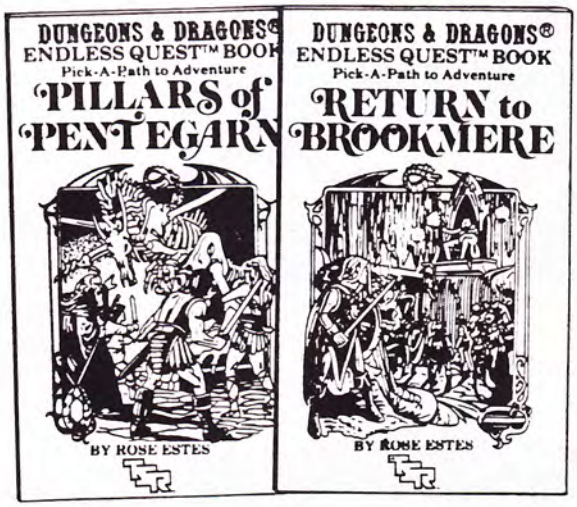

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D&D® PLAYERS ASSOCIATION NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER
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PAN PIPINGS

About four months ago, a copy of a brand new book landed on my desk with a hearty thump. **Monster Manual II** had arrived. OK, so Graeme Morris has already rambled on about this particular tome, but I would like to make a different point.

Monster Manual II adds another 300-plus monsters, creatures malign and benign, demons, demi-gods and plain weirdos to the list of sword-fodder at the Dungeon Master's command. The list of official monsters is now well over 1000 strong, and there must be a temptation for most DMs to use all of them. Nobody knows how many unofficial monsters exist — endless lists of new nasties appear regularly in most hobby fanzines, and DMs fall upon them with the subtlety of gold-crazed dwarves.

Dressing up new challenges for players in the disguise of Armour Class, Hit Dice and Damage statistics is a well established part of the game, yet at times it appears that some people regard it as the major part of the game. I happen to think that the **ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®** game is more than an exercise in garnering experience points, however carefully the statistics are disguised.

1000-plus monsters — aggressive beasts for the most part — are too many for any one campaign. Despite the fact the creatures are given in **AD&D™** or **D&D®** game form, there is no real reason to use them. A campaign where every room, bush, tree or fairy grotto conceals a creature that the players have never seen before is not one where a high degree of role-playing skill will be evident. There will be lots of dice rolling, as the characters desperately try to do unto whatever they have encountered before they are done in, but that is not role-playing — it's mayhem.

Most players will love it, especially those who play and go up two or three levels every evening — good luck to them. All those walking experience point awards are too good an opportunity to miss. Those players are having a thoroughly enjoyable time playing a game that is exactly what they want.

I am not arguing against new monsters, but in favour of a bit of restraint. Of the **MM2** creatures, only the bookworm — and one or four others — will make a regular appearance in my campaign (such as it is). To do anything else would render useless the body of knowledge that players have already built up about the world their characters adventure across, and this would make role-playing and dealing with creatures as anything other than "things to be done in" impossible.

If all the creatures that players encounter are a novelty, then the temptation to kill it 'just in case it is a deadly doobrybeast' becomes far too strong. The game degenerates into a dice rolling war and an exercise in memory — the players try to remember exactly how a particular variety of green spotted kneenibbler does the dirty deed.

Any modules I write in future will not be filled with monsters who are nothing more than walking experience points. Every once in a while I will slip in a new monster or two, as in **Black Roses** — it gives nothing away to say that one group is mounted upon minimal elephants — but it will be the exception rather than the rule.

And now, with two serious **PAN Pipings** to my credit, I (Mike Brunton, Games Philosopher), might be allowed to be silly next time. Bully for me!

Mike Brunton

DISPEL CONFUSION

Dispel Confusion is a question and answers column intended to help hobby gamers overcome problems they have had with game rules.

At present we only answer questions about games with a ™ or ® after their names. These are TSR games, and while the answers that we produce may not be fully official, we do (occasionally) meet the designers.

For interesting answers, we first need good questions – so send your queries to: ***Dispel Confusion, TSR UK Ltd, The Mill, Rathmore Road, CAMBRIDGE CB1 4AD.***

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® and ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® games

Q. Can a magic user use a quarterstaff in the D&D® game? He or she can, after all, use a magical staff *(Basic)*.

A. Despite the fact that a magic user can carry a magical staff it cannot be used in combat as a weapon. The only weapon a magic user may carry is a dagger, despite the fact that many seem to carry (and use) staves in battle! Anything other than this seems to be a rules import from the AD&D™ game.

Q. When characters need to find high level clerical spells to effect cures, is it possible to find these within temples or by the use of a sage? What is the price of resurrection, and where can it be found *(Advanced)*?

A. The costs of buying the effects of a clerical spell (**not** the spell itself) are given on p103/4 in the **DMG**, in the section 'Hiring Non-Player Characters to cast spells or use devices'.

The prices given are advisory, and do not include a 'have spell, will travel' option — a player character must go to the spell caster.

The rules do not list the cost of resurrection, which can be seen as a sign of special favour from the gods and should only go to characters who have performed noteworthy deeds for their cause. The idea of buying a resurrection just isn't reasonable. Clerics capable of casting **resurrection** should not be very common anyway — 16th level and 18 wisdom as minimum prerequisites — and they will be concerned with matters of greater importance than the deaths of low-level adventurers.

Finally, a sage would not necessarily know any spells at all. Sages' areas of knowledge are usually sharply defined, and need not include any spell-casting abilities.

Q. If a monster requires a +1 or better weapon to be hit, would it be vulnerable to poison *(Advanced)*?

A. Some monsters are immune to poison even if players overcome the problem of actually getting the poison into the monster's system. On top of this, the DM must consider the strength of the poison used (see **DMG** p20-21) and the size/physical make-up of the monster (see **DMG** p81). Magical or undead creatures would always be immune.

Q. Can an opponent be killed by being strangled *(Advanced)*?

A. Yes, strangulation holds can be found in **DMG** p73, under the grappling rules. The coffer corpse attacks by this method. The attack of the meazel and some types of assassination can be seen as strangulation — after all, the exact method used by an assassin is never specified.

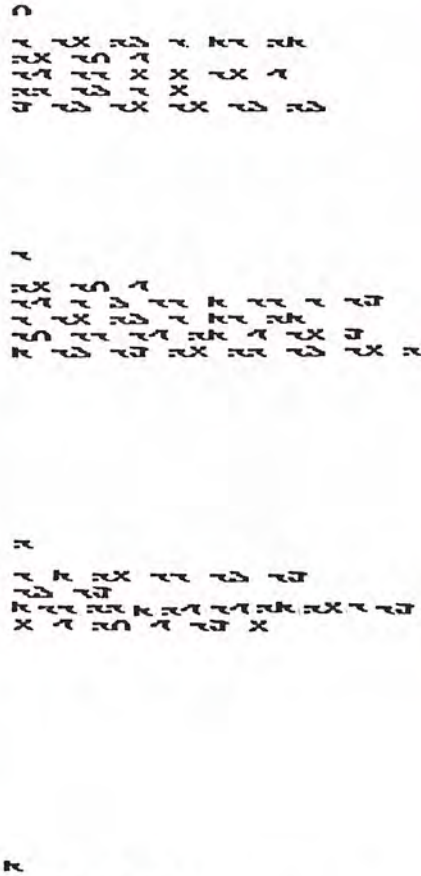
TURNBULL TALKING

Some have said that they would like to see tests, or puzzles, in this column. Well, let's see how this one goes down.

I claim no originality — this particular piece of work recently confronted the players in one of Patrick Thompson's fiendish adventures (and is the first of three related puzzles, which may all appear in these pages eventually).

All we knew was this: our party had been following the course of a river in a deep valley, hemmed in by high mountains. We were aware that, long ago, a cult of spell-casters lived in this area (and, apart from anything else, exacted tolls from those who passed through). Then we came upon a black pillar, 40' high, octagonal in plan, and with no apparent entrances.

Going closer, we saw symbols on each of the eight faces of the pillar. They appeared to form 'verses', one verse on each face. The diagrams on the right show roughly what we saw:



So, your task is straight forward enough: can you decipher the meaning of the eight verses and discover the principles of the cult? To provide some reward for your efforts, I'll offer a copy of **I6 — Ravenloft**, one of the finest modules to come out of the AD&D™ game, to the person who provides the first correct entry out of the bag on March 1st. Just address your entries to **Turnbull Talking**, IMAGINE magazine, The Mill, Rathmore Road, CAMBRIDGE CB1 4AD. It's not as difficult as it might appear at first, so give it a try. If our party could solve it, it should be a piece of cake for you lot out there!

Don Turnbull

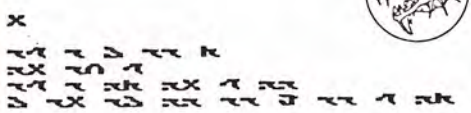
STAR FRONTIERS™ game

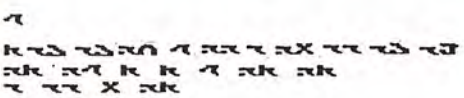
Q. The rules say that a gas mask fits over the wearer's face. How does this protect a vrusk, which breathes through many small holes in its underside, or a dralasite, which breathes through its entire skin?

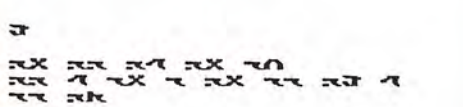
A. The description of a gas mask was written from a human point of view. A vrusk gas 'mask' is a harness arrangement that straps to the underside of the body. The gas filter is a thin sheet of a plastic material which covers the nostrils.

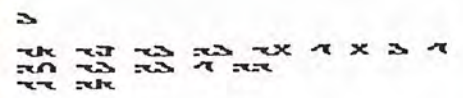
A dralasite gas 'mask' would be better described as a gas 'suit' — it completely covers the creature. Again, the thin plastic filter prevents the harmful gases getting through. The suit does not have an oxygen supply, and this limits the amount of oxygen reaching the dralasite, so it can only be worn for a short period of time. Dralasites in gas suits also become overheated, but these may be worn with other defensive suits.

Mike Brunton, Graeme Morris Phil Gallagher & Jim Bambra



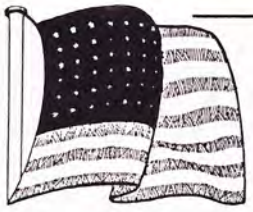






DIALOG

While gamers assess the play-aids accumulated over Christmas, ***Lew Pulsipher*** *examines the gimmicks.*



As I walked into the 'study', Alter was sitting at the 'typing dresser' — an old dresser with the drawers and fittings on one side cut out to create a typing desk. He was pushing a button on a strange hand-held contraption and making marks on a sheet of paper. 'What's going on?'

'I'm rolling this die to see if it has any bias. Boring, but necessary for a review. Here, you do it for a while.'

'No, no, Alter, that's your department. But it isn't a die, it's a.... well.... '

'It's a **Dragonbone**,' said Alter. 'You set this slide-marker to 3, 4, 6, 8, 12, 20 or %, push the button, and one or two of these lights come on, to give you the result of the 'roll'. It uses a 9 volt battery; turns itself off about 30 seconds after the last 'roll'. Quick, no lost or fumbled dice, and it even warns you when the battery's getting weak.'

'But only a referee would really gain speed from it,' I pointed out. 'Is it accurate?'

'Not bad. Even microcomputer random generators aren't entirely random. And most commercial dice aren't really accurate. Too bad it costs so much, but I suppose they can't produce large quantities.'

Alter had other FRP aids stacked beside him. 'Have you been holding out on me? What is all this stuff?'

'Well, Puls, this' — he picked up a wooden box-like thing about seven inches high that reminded me of a square castle gate tower with the drawbridge down — 'is a **Fair Shake** dice device. You drop your die (or dice) in the hole at the top, and it comes out here, absolutely fairly rolled because it hits a couple of walls inside the FS.' "Here" was the gate and drawbridge — a parapet around the drawbridge kept the dice from rolling away. He demonstrated.

'Nice sound,' I said. 'It looks well made, but I wouldn't want to accidentally put all my weight on it, so it would have to stay on a table. I can't see a referee using it, either — a little too cramped for rolling dice over and over. What'll they think of next?'

'Well, boss, what about this?' Alter unrolled what looked like a heavy fabric mat to reveal a brown surface, the colour of old parchment, on which a square grid was printed in light brown. 'You can draw on this fabric-backed vinyl surface with water-soluble pens, then erase with a wet cloth. Great for drawing walls, furniture, areas of spell effects, and so on. It's called a **Battlemat**. This one is 23 x 26 25mm squares. They also have larger **Megamats**, mats with 21mm squares, and mats with various sizes of hexes.'

'That's great; it'd be ideal if the water wasn't needed. Got any more toys?'

'Just this.' Alter held what appeared to be an 8-sided die, but with each corner snipped off. 'It's a "d4 that rolls" — numbered 1 to 4 twice, and with the corners cut off to differentiate it from the d8 as well as to let it roll better. Cheap, too.' He handed it to me.

'Neat,' I said. 'But it looks like the lousy plastic that TSR USA makes dice with — the ones that wear out.'

Alter smiled. 'If so, these guys have just cut the corners off rather than let them wear away. But that's all I've got, and I want to ask you more about **Wrath of Con**.'

'About the refereeing, you mean. As I said, the referees didn't use any kind of display other than a 'standard marching order' the players wrote on the board. There are an awful lot of situations where the standard doesn't, or at least *shouldn't*, apply — such as opening a door on one side of a corridor. When you don't use pieces and a grid of some sort — heck, you don't even need the grid in some cases — the referee can screw you to the ground by making assumptions about where you are. You've got no way to disprove his assumption.'

'You could tell him where you want to be in each case.'

'With seven or nine players? What a lot of noise. And why such a silly requirement? I remember the first time I played the **D&D**® game, the referee wanted me to tell him whenever I, an elf, wanted to look for secret doors. It didn't cost me any game time to look as I walked along, so for several hours I called out 'elf, elf' almost constantly — he liked secret doors — until he finally gave up and let me look all the time without saying so. What a waste. Why should I have to be constantly on guard to thwart the ref's faulty assumptions, anyway? It's much easier to have someone set up pieces.'

'So how did the refs take advantage of their own sloppiness?'

'In the worst case, we'd hacked our way through a dungeon with 13th level characters and finally reached a door behind which we knew there was evil. We were in a hurry because our time was almost up, and because we had some impatient people along. So we opened the door to attack. The ref assumed we were all strung out directly behind the door openers — this was a big room — so that the red dragon inside could blow away the lot of us with one breath. Zandy was so mad — never having played without a board and pieces and knowing he wasn't stupid enough to have his MU exposed — that he just assumed he'd made his saving throw. And that MU was all that saved us. I wasn't quite so annoyed because I was a paladin who would have been in line of fire anyway.

'In another case we were a group of six. There were four fighter types and five monsters, so the referee assumed that the fifth monster would automatically get through to one of the spell-casters. That got me a little hot — we had no chance to block the monster, even though we were fighting indoors and had just emerged from a flight of stairs. Somehow the area became dimensionless and shapeless so that the monster could get to the caster. It's no wonder many players are tactically inept if they play with refs like that — they have no opportunity to use manoeuvre or position to their advantage.'

'So what's the solution?'

'Use pieces of some kind, even if they're cardboard (which I prefer anyway). Use a square-grid board indoors, hex grid for outdoors. Those Battlemats are good. Pay attention to position and scale. Mainly, be aware of how rotten the "no board" method is.'

Lew Pulsipher

Product information *(for US mail order, unfortunately - British and other non-US readers will have to enquire):*

DRAGONBONE*, DB Enterprises, 14030 S Laramie, Crestowood, IL 60445. $24.95 plus $1.00 shipping* ***FAIR SHAKE Dice Device****, JandeL Products, Inc, Box 28243-1, Kansas City, Missouri 64118. $12.95 plus $2.00 shipping* ***BATTLEMATS*** *and* ***MEGA-MATS****, Berkeley Game Company, 2039 Shattuck, Rm 206 Berkeley, CA 94704. $8.95 and $19.50 post paid* ***D4 THAT ROLLS****. 6 colours (black, deep blue, green, orange, red, white). Kilendale Enterprises, PO Box 391, Berkeley, CA 94701. $.30 each plus $.50 handling per order.*

THE RULE BIC OF MOGGEDON

THE HERALDS SET FORTH...

DUKE ALBERIC SATE IN MOGGEDOON
HE CALLED HIS HERALDS 'FORE HIS SEAT
"NOW HASTE YE ALL FRAE OOR GREAT HALL
AND GI'E MY WORD TAE ALL YE MEET.

"GO HIE YE UP AND HIE YE DOON
AND HIE YE ALL THROUGHOUT THE LAND
SO LOOK YE WELL WHERE MEN DO DWELL
AND CRY THAT THEY MAY UNDERSTAND —

"'COME HEARKEN ALL YE MEN OF WIT
AND ALL YE FOLK THAT BE'EN WISE
DUKE ALBERIC YE ALL DOTH CALL
TO STRIVE, AND ONE TO GAIN THE PRIZE'"

— TRADITIONAL —

YET SAGES WERE NOT EASY TO FIND,
FOR THEY DID DWELL APART...

KNOW THEN THAT THE OCEAN HAS MANY HIDDEN DEPTHS: YET WE DO NOT CALL THE SEA PROFOUND.

SHOW ME THE WAY TO GO HOME!

IN THE DESERT PLACES OF THE WORLD...

THOUGH THE PALM TREES ARE TALL, THEY DO NOT REACH THE SKY: YET A MONKEY CLIMBING THEM IN SEARCH OF NUTS MAY STILL ESPY THE HEAVENS.

'ZOUNDS, SIRRAH! ARE YOU A **REAL** SAGE?

HE **SMELLS** LIKE A REAL SAGE!

?!!!

NE PLUS $ ULTRA

AND SHUNNED THE COMPANY OF LESSER MEN.

THUDD!! THWACK!! THUMPP!!!

AAAGHK!

SOMETIMES IT PAYS TO BURY YOUR HEAD.

NOW HE'LL COME QUIETLY! HEH! HEH!

PLEASE SHOW ME THE WAY TO GO HOME!

YET RIGHT WILLINGLY DID THEY HEED THE CALL!

WISDOM RIPENETH AS THE FRUIT ON THE VINE: YET ONE MAY STILL TREAT A CAMEL WITH KINDNESS.

THE WAY IS NOT SIMPLE: NOR YET IS IT COMPLEX TO ONE IN TUNE WITH HIMSELF.

ZZZ!

ZZZ!

ZZZ!

ILLUMINATIONS

Picayune Elements

Avalon Hill's new role-playing game will be released shortly, and as reported earlier it will indeed be called **Powers & Perils**. The advance flyer that Avalon Hill have put out is long on tortuous verbosity but short on hard details. Thus we learn that the game has 'infinitely variable, comprehensive systems' which are, nevertheless, 'simple'. All facets are detailed without 'bearing you down with waves of picayune details'. This is probably because the picayune elements have been crammed remorselessly into the descriptions on the flyer. At the end we are told that 'As sure as the Sun rises, P&P will provide you with unique, challenging and constantly dynamic adventure'. Well, we'll just have to wait and see the game itself to measure the worth of this extravagant hype, but I do most sincerely hope that the game designer and the blurb writer are not one and the same person.

Another recent Avalon Hill release is the boardgame **Elric**. This is one of the titles that AH recently obtained from the Chaosium. It is based on Michael Moorcock's famous books, and gives players the chance to control entire armies and a few superheroes for good measure. It is described as being easy to learn and contains rules for spells, ancient artifacts, and some really mean dragons.

Ode to Oni

Recently I had the pleasure of being taken out to lunch by Celia Lund of **Chronicle Miniatures**. Between the soup of the day and the lasagne, fellow diners were startled to see Celia line up half a dozen 25mm figures on the table. These were the first in Chronicle's Official UK Bushido range; really stunning in detail and pose. I'm no expert on figures manufacture, but if the production figures retain the originals' detail, they will be something special. This first batch are all *Oni* (sort of Japanese devils) and will eventually be followed by other Japanese gems. Chronicle hope to have them in production early this year.

Crazy Imagination

Titan books have a new volume about that most intractable of lawmen — Judge Dredd. **Judge Child Book 1** (£3.50) sees the fearsome Dredd in a desperate search for the boy that the 'pre-cogs' have identified as the only person that can save Mega-City 1 from annihilation. Dredd is accompanied on his quest by Judge Hershey, a very female law-person, and Judge Lopez, who steadfastly refuses to shave off his moustache despite Judge Dredd's obvious antipathy to the hirsuite appendage. It's all good stuff with the usual mixture of bizarre characters, oddball humour and crazy imagination. Excellent comic-strip entertainment.

Witchhunter Trial

StatCon Simulations Inc are a new company from Bayonne, New Jersey. Their first game is called **Witchhunt** and is sufficiently out-of-the-ordinary to attract attention, which is so necessary for a game to make headway in today's cluttered market. Most games claim to offer vast scope for play with words like 'unlimited' and 'infinite' bandied around.

Witchhunt, on the other hand, is set in the very limited geographic area of Salem, Massachussetts in 1692. Astute readers will know that Salem achieved notoriety in that year as a result of allegations of witchcraft and the ensuing trials. In the game, players are either witches or magistrates and they must try to accomplish goals that are set for them by the Game Referee who is whimsically known as the Town Crier. StatCon say the game procedures are easy to play but nevertheless provide a challenge for even the most advanced role-player. Well of course everyone says that, but at least with this game you are getting something out of the ordinary AND a full colour 'Art Masterpiece' box. What more could you want?

The Third Step

In early December 1983, the board of TSR Inc, namely Gary Gygax, Kevin Blume and Brian Blume, visited TSR UK in Cambridge, to consult with the management of their UK subsidiary. While they were here, **IMAGINE** magazine was able to secure an interview with all three which shed some very interesting light on the future of the TSR family of games, which we hope to pass on over the next two issues.

For now, we will concentrate on the future of the D&D® game. Soon after the visit, a preliminary draft of the forthcoming **Companion Set** came over. Along with the information from the interview, this provides an exclusive insight into the future of the number one bestselling RPG.

The Companion Set is now going through the process of editing and playtesting, and TSR hope that it will be released in the USA in August — although there is an earlier date in mind as well, should it prove practical. That means it will arrive in the UK in October or November. The Companion Set will take the D&D game up to the 25th level, and is the third stage in the development of the game. Beyond, there will be the **Masters Set**, which will go up to 36th level, and then the **Immortals** — a provisional title for a set which will continue the game into the outer planes. There are also plans for a Campaign World supplement, but with the publication of that the D&D game will be considered *completed*. In other words, with the exception of modules, the five sets/books and the campaign supplement will be a complete role-playing system, suitable for all levels of play, which will not suffer additional complication after 1985. It will be 'a total universe'.

The Companion Set will introduce new armour and weapons, rules for unarmed combat, higher level spells, developments to the character classes, including the introduction of the druid (a form of high level cleric) and the paladin (a Lawful travelling fighter) and many developments to the high level demi-human. Rules for 'cashing' treasures and other procedural devices are introduced. Of course, there are new monsters, magic items, artifacts, and many hints for high level campaigns, from mixing with royalty to running an army.

Big Spenders

Gaming may be regarded as a hobby or an industry, but if the latter, it is a small industry compared to some others. For example, the UK home computer software market is thought to be 'worth' anything up to £100 million, this being the amount that computer owners are expected to spend on software in a full year. By contrast, the total amount spent on conventional games in this country during 1983 will probably amount to less than £5 million. Here I am referring to 'specialist games', an awkward phrase, which I shall have to keep on using nevertheless, and which is intended to cover all the role-playing systems, wargames, play-by-mail, and gaming with miniatures.

Because of the different sums involved, the companies producing games software are accustomed to operating on much bigger budgets than those in 'specialist' (or 'adventure') gaming, and until now there has not been much contact between the two industries. Most of the computer games sold during the last year were arcade games with no direct equivalent in conventional gaming categories.

But suddenly I am receiving 'phone-calls from established companies in the computer gaming business; not so much the from the software houses as from hangers-on like book and magazine publishers, who have built up a substantial share in this market on the backs of the innovators. They are asking me (or anyone else I can recommend) to write all sorts of stuff — books on computerised boardgames, articles on designing role-playing adventures, chapters on computer wargames.... Now, why is this?

Christmas Sales Boom

The reasons given are clear enough. During the year there has been a steady falling-off in sales of arcade software, and (at the time of writing) no-one seems to believe any longer in a Christmas sales boom to rectify the situation. Some of the companies involved have spent considerable sums to establish their position in the market and naturally want to anticipate the next round in public taste, to maintain their turnover.

Arcade games have always been criticised for their repetitive nature and short-term appeal, so it stands to reason that the micro owners will now switch their attention to 'intelligent' games software with more enduring qualities. The computer wargamers have promoted their branch of the hobby on the grounds that their games provide more lasting entertainment than ephemeral arcade imitations; so this is where the money should go. Role-playing enthusiasts seem to be content to play within the same game system, not only for hours at a time, but for year after year; that's what everyone will be doing in 1984.

Reaching the Big Time

No doubt you have already caught the tone of scepticism in this account, but I would not want to say that specialist gaming never reaches the big time. Occasionally it happens, the most notable example recently being the success of the **Fighting Fantasy Gamebook** series, which has sold to the general public in quantities unprecedented in conventional gaming.

But there are a number of reasons for looking very critically at the suggestion that computerised versions of specialist games will take over the market in 1984. For one thing, the publishers I've referred to have only negative reasons for wanting to move in this direction. So much money has already been spent buying a share of the market, that they are compelled to look for some new development that will support the current level of investment. They are not willing to accept that the existing market for their products is simply getting smaller as their customers move on from computer games to the next fad — 3D films, perhaps.

Nor do these moves into wargaming, play-by-mail and roleplaying by publishers and software houses reflect any sympathy with or even understanding of these game types. Indeed, the ignorance of these people is alarming in view of the amounts of money they are proposing to spend, and the idea of researching this unknown sector of the market does not seem to have occurred to them.

1984: Invasion of the Hordes?

I would not want to predict what the games software market will look like by the end of 1984, but it seems probable that it will look for an invasion by hordes of new players, suddenly discovering the delights of roleplaying, wargaming and other game types *via* computer versions of such games. I can think of two problems with this. One is that, if it were going to happen, it would have happened already. Computer versions of specialist games have been freely available, especially in the States, from a number of companies for several years — in fact, since before the rise in popularity of arcade games in 1981-2. With occasional exceptions, games of this type have not sold in huge quantities, no matter how heavily they have been promoted.

The other (more controversial) suggestion is that the majority of people lack a certain mental quality which is necessary for the enjoyment of all types of specialist games. Sometimes I think of this quality as 'interest in strategic planning', and sometimes I think is should be described as a 'long attention span'. If a computer game design demands such a quality from a player, this can always be detected, and no amount of flashy graphics or glossy packaging can disguise it. It turns most people off, although, for anyone who is sufficiently into gaming to be reading this magazine, it may well be the only redeeming feature of the game.

So I do not think the major publishers are going to save their shirts by concentrating on game designs of this type. For the time being, our interest in gaming is going to remain a minority one.

Mike Costello

USURPER for the ZX Spectrum

Game Review

Usurper is billed as 'The Multi-player Game of Strategy and Ruthlessness'. The program is supplied on cassette, with versions for both sizes of ZX Spectrum. The only difference between the versions is that a maximum of six players may use the 16K program — up to ten players can use the 48K version. It loads without problems, in about two minutes.

The A3 map supplied is scruffily printed in grey on white paper; you provide your own counters. Instructions are minimal — a single sheet of paper about 3" by 4", which explains that the idea is to collect supporters by touring the country, aiming eventually to usurp the king. The game is based in fantasy rather than history, set in a feudal world populated by orcs, dragons, nomads and other nasties. The design resembles the **Barbarian Prince** boardgame closely, although Usurper is worse in every respect.

Each player has four attributes, Strength, Provisions, Followers and Gold. These are not explained anywhere, but they seem to behave in the usual manner for such games: if your Strength falls to zero you can take no further part in the game; Gold is used to hire followers and pay for provisions, and so on.

Players take turns moving around the map. As they move they tell the computer what terrain they are in: village, plain, mountain, desert, temple, castle or inn. You only enter the details of the hex in which you stop at the end of each turn. Alas, there is no terrain index, and there do not seem to be any inns on the map!

As an alternative to stating what terrain you are in, you may choose to fight a player. The program asks you which of the players you wish to fight (which may be yourself, if you are interested in civil war) and the battle takes place. The words OUCH and WHAM scroll up the screen, accompanied by sound effects, and then you are told who won. The same display and sound is used for encounters with non-player characters. You cannot influence combat in any way once it starts.

Each type of terrain has associated hazards and opportunites — you hire followers at the village, seek blessings from the temple, appeal for baronial aid at the castle, and so on. These events seem entirely random and interaction is minimal. As an example, let us consider the options available at the inn. When you arrive you may either eat or gamble. A look at the program (which is written in unprotected BASIC) reveals a rather unsound financial basis for the gambling. Two numbers between one and six are generated. If the first exceeds the second, you win six times your stake, otherwise you lose the sum gambled. Unlike any inn I have ever visited, you can buy food even if you have no money — your account goes into debt!

At random a thief ('UNGE the Unwise Hippy'!) steals half of your money. If you are in debt he will take half of your debt instead. Without piling on the agony, other stages of the game are equally arbitrary, and even when a group of players is involved the game is less than compelling. There are no graphics — colour and flashing text is used, making some messages completely unreadable. **Usurper** is the worst game — of any kind — I have ever reviewed. The presentation would disgrace an amateur and the 'game' is a collection of random events with arbitrary consequences. The computer merely serves to conceal the lack of skill which went into the design and implementation of the game.

Simon Goodwin

***Usurper** (£6.00) is published by Assassin Software, 10 Ash Road, Leeds, LS6 3JF.*

Computer Games to Play and Write
by Dan Isaaman

Book Review

This book contains listings for a number of fairly simple computer games, at an attractive price. For another £5.95 you can get a tape of all the games in the book; quite a common practice among computer book publishers, but for some reason such tapes never seem to sell very well.

A methodical approach is taken to the problem of incompatible BASICs; the programs were written and tested originally on the BBC Micro, but the first 17 listings are displayed with lines excised wherever they use some feature of BASIC which is not found on all machines. The missing lines are then found in a series of boxes at the end of the listing, so that, for example, the owner of a **Dragon** only has to type in the lines from the box labelled 'Dragon'. Owners of **Spectrums**, **Acorns**, **Dragons** and **Commodore** micros can therefore make use of the book.

The 18th program, *Cowboys and Indians*, is given in separate versions for each machine and is a little more sophisticated than the others. It is of course no good to expect extensive use of sound and graphics, because of the method by which the programs have been written for maximum compatibility among the various micros.

The programs are quite well annotated with explanation. The games themselves would be likely to appeal only to the 7-12 age range, but the book would actually be quite a useful purchase for anyone interested in creating their own computer games (in BASIC) who is a complete beginner. There is a chapter explaining how a programmer can design a computer game from scratch which is quite well done, although the attempt to give a summary of all BASIC statements at the end of the book is too brief to be useful. In general, this is a book which encourages the reader to progress from copying listings to designing original games, and which can be recommended on this basis.

Mike Costello

***Computer Games to Play and Write** is published by Sparrow Books, price £1.50*

Game Reviews

Adventure 9 — NOMADS OF THE WORLD OCEAN

Interested in ecology? Worried about endangered species? Then **Traveller Adventure 9 — Nomads of the World Ocean** could be the adventure for you.

On the water world of Bellerophon live the daghadasi, gigantic ocean dwellers which mass in the region on 150,000,000 kilos. Until recently the daghadasi were hunted solely by a small percentage of Bellerophon's population, the nomads of the title. But that was until Seaharvester Corporation discovered that certain pre-reproductive-phase daghadasi produced the chemical PDBT-beta. Scientists working on PDBT-beta discovered its pharmaceutical value and its commercial potential. Seaharvester were not slow to exploit this opportunity and widespread slaughter of the young daghadasi began.

Soon nomads were complaining about dwindling herds, and city dwellers were swamped by rotting carcasses drifting against the cities' foundations. In the ensuing public outcry, strict quotas were imposed on Seaharvester by its parent company SuSag.

To all intents and purposes, Seaharvester seem to be sticking to their quotas. However, the nomads are complaining that Seaharvester is still up to its slaughter. The Pangalactic Friends of Life are greatly concerned, for the daghadasi are an important part of the ecology of the planet. Without the daghadasi to keep down the small marine life which feeds on the large floating plant formations, it is feared that the oxygen/carbon dioxide balance will be upset. This may lead to the planet becoming uninhabitable as the increased CO_2 gives rise to an intense greenhouse effect. Players are hired by the Friends of Life to find out what is really happening and put a stop to it.

The designers have put a lot of thought into this adventure and **Nomads** is rich in background material, as the above shows. The action takes place on Bellerophon, involving the players in a number of interesting situations. Good role-playing is called for in a fair number of places. The supplied background makes this a relatively easy task; most situations are covered, as are the major NPCs. The role-playing sections will provide players with a lot of fun as they discover the workings of the planet's culture.

The more action-minded are not forgotten either. There is the opportunity to participate in a dangerous daghadasi hunt — racing along the sea in small water craft. Rules have been written specially to give the feel and thrill of a high-powered hunt.

Nomads is an excellent piece of work: it has intrigue, action, role-playing and a wealth of background. This world has been well developed; there is none of the sketchiness common to many Traveller worlds. On Bellerophon you can smell the sea, marvel at the enormous daghadasi and become immersed in the culture of the nomads. Nomads is an adventure that I recommend most highly; a superb piece of work.

Jim Bambra

***Adventure 9 - Nomads of the World Ocean** is a module for the **Traveller** game from Games Workshop, 27/29 Sunbeam Road, London NW10 6JP. Price £2.95*

TALISMAN

Talisman is an introductory fantasy boardgame for 2-6 players (best played with 3-5), produced by Games Workshop and designed by Robert Harris. The game box and components are all excellently illustrated by Gary Chalk. Under the box-lid, there is a one-piece A3 sized board, many cards (a 104 card *Adventure* pack; a *Spell* pack of 24 cards; 28 equipment cards to represent characters' purchases; and 14 character cards complete with pictures, which fit into plastic stands to make large, full-colour playing pieces), plus a die, a sheet of counters, and an eight-page rule book. All the components are physically very good, and the cards, although thin, are printed on tough plastic-coated card.

The board is divided into three regions, and it is every player's objective to travel through the first two and into the third, at the end of which is the *Crown of Command*, which is a very powerful artifact which drains the life force of other players until either the Commander is attacked or the victim dies. Once one character is in the lead, it may be necessary for other characters to form alliances to even things up. One of the few occasions when any skill can be used in the game is when a player decides whether she or he is powerful enough to survive the tests of the Inner Region. After a while, one learns the knack of the game, reducing the skill level still further.

The rules of the game are well written and easy to understand, but sometimes fail to give all the required information — obviously an unforgiveable mistake in any set of rules. An example of this is the game's treatment of Spells, where an important omission occurs, ie the failure to state how spells are actually obtained, and an important error is also to be found, in that it is possible (as the rules stand) for a wizard to cast many spells in one turn, when there should really be a limit of three.

Obviously, this is a luck game, and the amount of luck required is sometimes very frustrating. However, quite an epic fantasy atmosphere builds up around the game, and it plays efficiently and cleanly. If you like fantasy boardgames, this is quite a good example.

Andy Blakeman

***Talisman** is produced by Games Workshop (see above), and costs £7.95*

Distributors' names are given for information only

JAMES BOND 007

Role Playing In Her Majesty's Secret Service

This new role-playing game attempts to reproduce the exploits of the British Secret Service (MI6) as depicted in the James Bond books, the players running agents of their own creation or even Bond himself.

Basic Rulebook

An essential part of any RPG is that the players can relate to their characters and the world or mythos they find themselves in, and here this game is clearly at an advantage. Who has not read a Bond book or seen a film? Evidently Victory Games have the rights to use some of the names and details of these. Therefore the basic rulebook uses such familiar names as *Jaws, Sheriff J W Pepper* and *Anya Amasova* to name but a few. Notable omissions are those of *Blofeld* and *Spectre* which are replaced with *Karl Skorpios* and *Tarot*.

The rules themselves incorporate one of the better design features of RPGs. Character statistics are not random but worked out by the player (who cannot complain about bad rolls). The character backgrounds for NPCs are useful, and are embellished to provide ideas for scenarios ....although it seems strange that Lady Victoria was born in the Manchester area of London.... Also included is a description of MI6 headquarters in London, together with history and staff details (yes, including *Moneypenny* and *M*). The backgrounds of a few major cities are provided, which should prove useful.

An attempt is made to simulate the many chases in which Bond always finds himself. The result is the best so far, and could possibly be used in other games systems. Similarly the Hero point system aims to reproduce Bond's ability to surmount impossible odds. I like the manner in which these are gained: through accomplishing a task (such as driving) with an exceptional die roll. Also an interesting idea is that for game purposes both money and languages are irrelevant. Since when did Bond worry about how to pay his hotel bills or not understand what the villain is saying?

As for the Introductory Adventure, **Dr No**, this is very much a mini-scenario. It can be run solo or with players and a GM, eg: *'If you defeat the guards and probe deeper into the complex, go to 22'*. The format gives you some idea of how the game is meant to be played. It implies that players should surrender to the villain (as Bond does) and not always try to shoot their way out. Clearly, followers of the 'hack and slay' approach will be disappointed. More importantly, they will probably be dead.

Needless to say, I have some reservations about this game. The combat system takes a backward step, which is a pity: there is no hit location. Presumably the designers would argue that their simplistic approach was to speed up the game. True, but most role-players want interesting combat. Finally, this game is clearly unsuitable for a large group of players — imagine them packing into M's office, packing into lifts and queueing up to seduce the villainess. Indeed, if there are too many, then villains will need platoons of infantry to overcome them. A necessary evil to improve play balance would be to separate them. However, this never works due to the extra complication for the GM.

An excellent game for those primarily interested in role-playing rather than combat. It is not recommended for more than three players and is best with less.

Q Manual

The **Q Manual** is clearly an essential aid to the basic game. It contains not only a wealth of equipment, but also background on Q branch and its members (some of which are not in the films). Most items have a drawing to be shown to the players and information about them. Some of them contain embellishments or even ideas for scenarios, such as who drives a particular type of car. Armament includes the inevitable Walther PPK and more sophisticated weaponry such as was used on the autogyro in *You Only Live Twice*. In the Transport section, the Aston Martin from *Goldfinger* makes an appearance. Among the devices described is the shaving canister flamethrower from *Moonraker*. The Drugs and Poisons section contains such nasties as *Sea Wasp* jellyfish poison.

Perhaps the colour stills from the films upped the price a little; beyond that, a valuable companion.

Octopussy Module

As is normal in Bond movies, the plot of **Octopussy: A 007 Module** contains exotic locations such as Sotheby's and a palace in India. Naturally, the stakes of the mission are higher than is realised at first. In an attempt to introduce some surprises, important details have been changed from the film; anyone who has memorised the film plot is in for a nasty surprise. However, it might be useful for the GM to see the film, as there are great leaps in the settings, and the links are sometimes difficult to grasp.

The module contains an envelope of props to give to the players, which is novel. I like the bloodstained message, which you crumple up before handing to them. On the other hand, the wealth of biographical details on the NPCs is perhaps too unmanageable. Also, I suspect there will always be the problem that the players don't "play the game" and take out the major villain or henchman too early (Bond never does this).

A bit more expensive than the average scenario, this one does contain more than some. Octopussy should be enjoyed by those who enjoy some character interaction rather than just gunning them down.

Nick Davison

James Bond 007 Basic Game, Q Manual *and* ***Octopussy module*** *(price £7.95, £7.95 and £5.95 respectively) are distributed in Britain by Avalon Hill, 650 High Road, N Finchley, London N12 ONL.*

These games are available from hobby shops.

LOST WORLDS

Lost Worlds is a series of booklets, each containing details of a different fantasy character, and capable of being used with any other booklet in the series to simulate a fantasy combat. With each of the 32-page booklets you get the rules for play on the inside cover and a glossy card showing the manoeuvres available to that particular character.

In order to do battle, you need two players, each armed with one of the booklets from the series. It is important to note that this game cannot be played with only one booklet. Keeping hold of your own character sheet, you then swap books with your opponent and turn to the starting page. There you see a picture of your opponent standing, facing you menacingly. Each turn, you pick and compare manoeuvres, and using the booklets find the page showing the view that you then get of your opponent.

At first the game is great fun, but once the novelty wears off so, unfortunately, does much of the fun. Effectively each move is self-contained, and in fact the only way your previous move can affect the current one is in restricting the choice of manoeuvres; consequently the game becomes rather disjointed. Also, with only 32 possible views/manoeuvres, eight less at close range, and these restrictions, play can become rather limited.

Each character in the series "has its own strengths and weaknesses", but the Man in Chainmail with the sword and shield, Goblin with mace and shield and Skeleton with scimitar and shield are all basically the same. There is an experience point system for improving victorious characters and also rules for multiple combat where one character fights many opponents. Incidentally, an earlier game called **Ace of Aces** uses a similar but much better combat system for 1st World War aerial combat in which you can have more than one combatant on each side.

All in all, Lost Worlds is a quick, fun system, if you can ignore its shortcomings (one other minor but notable point is that the covers wear very quickly and are best protected with clear plastic before use) — but I cannot imagine myself playing much more than a quick battle or two while waiting to start an evening's role-playing. ***Chris Hunter***

***Lost Worlds** comes from Nova Game Designs Inc, with four booklets currently available in the UK, costing £1.95 each.*

EARTH 2020

Published independently by Stephen E D Kyffin of Newquay, **Earth 2020** is a role-playing game set in the not-too-distant future (2020 AD to be exact). The quality of life has improved over the decades, and technology now takes a lot of drudgery out of life, leaving the average person more time to enjoy their own interests — job satisfaction, then, is at a high level. But what of those who cannot sit down to a daily routine? What happens to those who feel that they must seek adventure, fight evil and promote good? These are the people that players represent in Earth 2020.

Book 1 contains 44 pages of superb illustrations and reduced type, divided into four sections. The first of these acts as an introduction to life on Earth, and is 11 pages long. Many subjects are covered, from Leisure to the Military, and from Space to Undersea Cities. Completely absent is any information on the current political situation, anything on current wars, or anything on International Relations. These will be covered, to some extent, in Book 2.

The rules for Character Generation, which also cover money and equipment, follow. Characters are measured by physique and knowledge (as represented by skills) and NPCs have personality traits as well. The rules are very quick in use, and once your character has been through school, she or he has the option of trying for University, College, or for a job. The rules for jobs cover over 160 careers, from road working to bacteriological science, from poetry to football. The system includes promotion rules, emotional involvement and hazards — but retains simplicity.

Following the notes on Money (sensibly handled in 1980 values) there is a list of equipment — including an 88mm Heavy Support Gun at £975 (£975??), a two-man hovercopter at £18,000 and some other interesting items. A lot of the items are illustrated, a device that allows good development of atmosphere; but the list is quite short and prices are a bit dodgy.

The next section, which deals with Skills, is very concise and presents an excellent system for almost any situation in which the referee feels unqualified to judge the result. The system includes definitions of fifty skills, plus a table of those available. Several examples are given of skill use, including the rules for the effects of failure in an action, but the rules are not complex in any way.

Finally, the book covers Combat with an excellent set of rules allowing aiming, location hits, proportional damage (more damage for a head hit than a leg hit and so on) plus rules for firing and target positions — all in two die rolls and a few modifications! The time required to work out three seconds of combat is very slight, but the results have that certain feel of reality. All in all, an excellent set of rules.

There are some very interesting ideas in this game — new angles of play not previously covered. A skill called 'Mind Awareness' gives details of training for 'hunch' and 'vibe' reactions — a sort of primitive but believable psionics. Space is controlled by the Earth Space Federation, which is the only organisation in Space permitted to have weapons, and even then they only use them in dire need. The technological advances described are all possible now; all the author does is to present a possible way that their use might develop.

Some readers will be curious about Book 2, and whether the rest of the game will be biased towards rule-play or role-play. From the Book, and letters from Stephen, it seems that Earth 2020 will give players the choice of whether to use simple or detailed rules. In this, the game will appeal to a wide audience, allowing many different styles of play to be created. Book 2 will be entitled **Mercenary**, and will give more information about combat, as well as a challenging scenario and a detailed Moroccan setting — complete with maniac drivers believing that Allah will protect them... (shame that Allah is a slightly less than competent driver!). Later books will probably include very few weapons and will require initiative for survival.

Really, this game is hard to criticise. The lack of a political introduction is defended by Stephen as being deliberate, allowing people to use their own ideas. The rules could be criticised for their similarity to the **Traveller** game, but all the author could have done is to take the good part of those rules and improve upon them... And little inconsistencies found in the prices are easily rectified.

Therefore, I feel that I can recommend this game system to many gamers, whatever style of play they prefer, as a good system for role-playing. Full marks!

Andy Blakeman

***Earth 2020** is available from Stephen Kyffin, 7 Trevose Avenue, Newquay, Cornwall TR7 1NJ, for £2.00 + 30p P&P*

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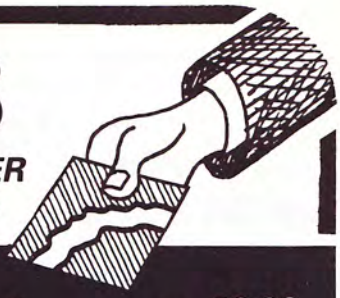

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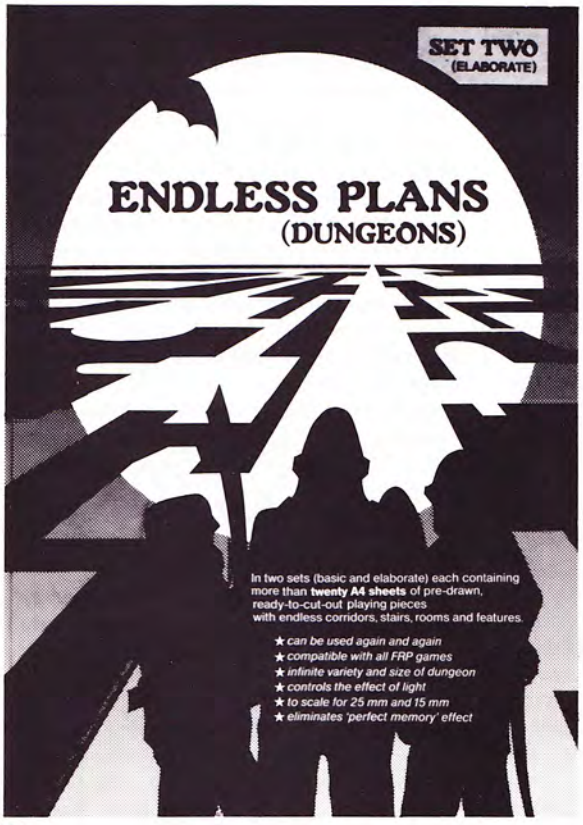
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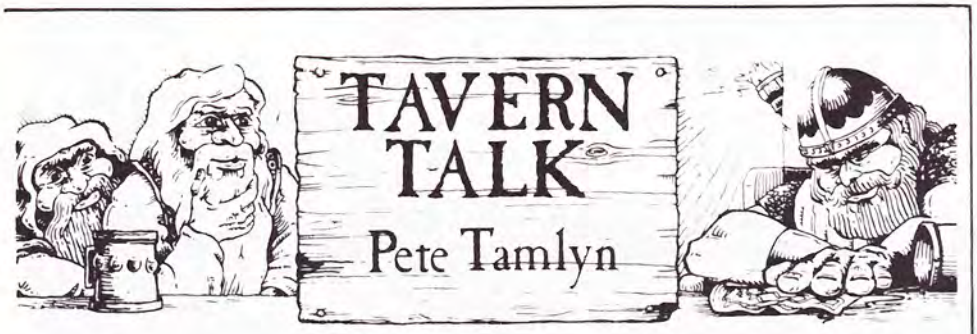

Games Day. Hmm, yes, Games Day. It was embarrassing. Not, you will understand, because I was first into the bar — we alcohol-sodden journalists have our reputations to maintain. Nor was it due to the hordes of admiring fans, as Paul Mason was doing a sterling job of impersonating me and drawing their attention. No, it was embarrassing because **Acolyte** was well placed in the Best Fanzine section of the Games Day Awards and it is now only a matter of time before some smart alec (probably John Harrington) says, 'there, that proves it is read by Irvings!'.

Security, it seems, has lapsed a little since the time when Trevor Graver refused to let Uncle Don in because he didn't have a pass. I, of course, had my ill-gotten complimentary ticket, but Kat simply sweet-talked her way past the guards. Mind you, considering the superior calibre of staff they employ at Workshop these days, it is hardly surprising. Their latest recruit, Ian Marsh, the well known and independent co-editor of the famous, independent house fanzine, **Dragonlords**™, says he is one of five graduates working in the GW packing department.

In fact this 'jobs with the pros' lark seems to be becoming almost expected of the socially aware fanzine editor, for on a recent visit to Games Centre who should I find among the staff but the hobby's favourite bottle blond, Dave Hulks. Who's next, Norledge? Bayliss? McKeown? Your guess is as good as mine, but the fellow who suggested that someone might employ Quartermain can go to the bottom of the class.

To be fair, at the exhibition Ian (Marsh, that is) was trying hard to maintain his street credibility. The official Games Day T-shirt was worn, but was well covered up. However, the whistle was blown completely by Marc Gascoigne in the editorial to **Dragonlords 19**. Far from castigating his ex-fellow editors for selling out, Marc tried hard to imply that it was all part of some grand design. 'We ARE going to be the future of this country's gaming industry' he proclaimed, and with an uncharacteristic fit of modesty added, 'us alongside our peers, that is'. Amazing, isn't it: a couple of bright blokes latch onto a promising new idea and grow from a small fanzine to a huge successful company and every fanzine editor thereafter suffers from delusions of grandeur. I suppose it makes a change from thinking that you are Napoleon.

Hell and damnation corner. After all my barbed comments about Waste Drain copying the best features of IMAGINE^{KGB} magazine, my glorious leaders have started copying the Drain. Yes, we've got a Lew Puddleduck column. Mind you, it looks as if the strain of being so much in demand (or possibly of having to write in such small print) is beginning to tell, as our Lewis is beginning to sound interesting. His tolerance of atmospheric role-playing seems to have come a long way. Keep it up, Lew.

Good news for Vasey time, for a certain well-known columnist of considerable literary ability was recently heard to enquire of me where they had found such an eloquent contributor.

Meanwhile, back in the whacky world of fandom, we have the **NMR!** FRP special to tear to shreds. As IMAGINE^{GCE} magazine readers doubtless know, let Creese talk about Diplomacy and he can be both erudite and entertaining. He should stick to it, because his review of fantasy fanzines has all the factuality and credibility of a von Daniken book. When he brought it along, hot off the presses, to the Buckingham Arms after that exhibition which I'm not going to talk about, several well-known editors could be seen crying into their beer with laughter.

Finally, I think I've got space for a little personal advertisement. One or two of you have been writing to me asking for sample copies of Acolyte. While Paul does his best in the zine reviews section he can't impart all of the necessary information about every zine every time. Normally your best bet is to get hold of **20YO** before writing to any editor, but if anyone is daft enough to write to me straightaway, please bear the following points in mind. First, Acolyte (and many other fanzines) is of a similar size to IMAGINE™ magazine and most of the SAEs that I get aren't big enough and have the wrong stamp. But, I send samples for free, so there's no need to send money immediately. Finally, the price that Paul quotes is the price for a single copy of the whole zine — prices are less for bulk subscriptions or if you elect not to receive the game reports. This has been a gross abuse of privilege announcement on behalf of Putkin Press.

Pete Tamlyn

Fanzines

We seem to be seeing new RPG fanzines at the rate of at least one a month at the moment. The standard varies enormously, but at least it shows a string of willing writers and editors are out there prepared to have a go. **D&D Fortnightly 1** is the latest — and it drops itself squarely into trouble with its very name. That's what all this ™ and ® is about, folks, you can't go around calling yourself the D&D anything, and you can't make money out of a TSR trademark. Beyond that, this is an example of a couple of young lads having fun from their hobby; it isn't very well produced, and has limited interest for anyone else.

A little better is another newcomer **Crystal Ball 1**, which clearly states that it is by and for the under-15s. It features a new character class, monsters, magic items and an 'advice' article; all simple and lightweight, and a reasonable source of this brand of gaming material. And lastly, we were sent **Dragon Roar 1-6** from Leeds Poly, which moved up the age range a little further. The contents are similar, but better thought out, and there are some genuinely useful articles in this journal. The clearest similarity is to **SEWARS 16**, for the blend of new game items plus reviews, aimed at a particular club membership, but readable beyond it, is very similar. SEWARS is very widely read these days and carries advertising — I think the time has come when it could improve its printing quality to match.

Zines like **Demon's Drawl 3** also carry 'games additions' material, but leavened with more news reviews and chat. DD has just been expanded to 44 pages, and represents quite good value. All the A4-sized zines seem to be better printed, and to offer more than just the new monsters. **Rapscallion 3** has an interesting letters page and tries (unsuccessfully) to produce pictures from **Games Day '83**. There are articles on the **Call of Cthulhu** game in **Tempestuous Orifice 3**, which is a zine I recommend heartily to anyone. **Miser's Hoard 3** is dedicated to the **Warhammer** game, an extract from the forthcoming supplement, which is quite a scoop.

The postal gaming zines seem a little thinner this month. I received **Masters of the Prime 8 & 10**, the first time I've seen this 'zine. It carries the expected content of letters, reviews and chat, along with its **En Garde** coverage. It even reviewed the shirt I wore at Games Day.... **NMR 45** was not one of the best issues to date — but then it was produced in something of a rush. Reviews, reports and letters along with **Diplomacy** make up the contents. **Take That You Fiend 10** was also curiously limp, though the reports on **En Garde** and **Dreadnought** were expansive. **Mad Policy 90**, as is its wont, concentrated on one item, **Midcon**, as well as carrying **Diplomacy**, Formula 1 and the dreaded **Finchley Central**. Thus this month, the two best value game-players zines, **Walamalaysia Gazette 37** and **Hopscotch 35**, come out on top. **Diplomacy** is the main string of the former, while you can find postal gaming of an ever-increasing variety in Hopscotch.

There are two publications which are virtually indispensible to the new or prospective postal gamer. **20 Years On 7** is a listing of all the postal zines, and allows a cheap look at all the prospective sources of particular games. The very much improved **Games Gazette 4** carries reviews, news and articles that allow a penetrating insight into gaming — along with puzzles, letters and adverts. It is professional magazine, and can stand away from the cliquishness that sometimes pervades this part of the hobby otherwise, and it covers a wide spectrum of games — postal or otherwise.

I also have four zines that do not easily sit within a category. **Wargame News 13** remains the best zine for those interested in the board wargaming scene. The reviews are always very comprehensive, which is a distinct advantage when you consider how much these games can cost. If you are really hooked on simulation wargames, then **Fire & Movement 38** ought to be high on your list. It is an American publication, and therefore does not have the immediate relevance of WN, but it goes into even greater depth. **Car Wars** fans ought to be on the lookout for **Autoduel Quarterly 2** & **3**, which both provide much more input for this crazy game. And there is **Brian Dolton's Book of Flower Pressing**. Those who can remember the **Pete Tamlyn Fan Club Newsletter** will appreciate this sequel for what it is. If you are not one of the in-crowd, then you can safely pass this by....

Fantasy Advertiser 82 was a joy as always, for those of us who have been Marvel and/or DC fans for years. The Postal Gaming column in this zine is getting much better, and, with the success of the **Superheroes** game, and the forthcoming release of the joint TSR/Marvel venture, the links between the comics fans and the gaming world will get closer. Perhaps age has something to do with it, since the same kind of bond has never really occurred between Sci-Fi fans and gamers. The **British SF Association** package, with **Vector 117**, **Matrix 50** and **Paperback Inferno 45**, provide very informative reading, but there seems to be no overlap at all between this and anything reviewed above.

Zines reviewed by Paul Cockburn

D&D Fortnightly, Chris Baker, 8 Town Green, Wymondham, Norfolk NR18 0PW, (18p); **Crystal Ball**, Duncan Harris, (no address supplied), (30p); **Dragon Roar**, Leeds Polytechnic SU, Beckett Pk Site, Beckett Park, Leeds LS6 3QS, (50p); **SEWARS**, Chris Baylis, 12 The Fryth, Basildon, Essex, (60p).

Demon's Drawl, Jeremy Nuttall, 49 Longdown Rd, Congleton, Cheshire, (35p); **Rapscallion**, Steve Norledge, 75 Hawkhurst Way, West Wickham, Kent BR4 9PE; **Tempestuous Orifice**, Patrick Fama, 15 York Close, Morden, Surrey, (55p); **Miser's Hoard**, John McKeown, 22 Hall Lane, Upminster, Essex RM14 1AF (50p).

Masters of the Prime, Bryan Betts, 4a Whitefields Flats, Univ of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL, (35p); **NMR!**, Brian Creese, 256 Canbury Pk Rd, Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey KT2 6LG, (45p); **Take That You Fiend**, Kevin Warne, 48 Boscombe Ave, Hornchurch, Essex RM11 1JG, (35p); **Mad Policy**, Richard Walkerdine, 144 Stoughton Rd, Guildford, Surrey GU2 6PG, (16p +p&p); **Walamalaysia Gazette**, Dave Thorby, 200 Lavender Hill, Enfield, Middx EN2 8NJ, (10p +p&p); **Hopscotch**, Alan Parr, 6 Longfield Gdns, Tring, Herts HP23 4DN, (20p +p&p).

20 Years On, 20 Winifred Rd, Coulsdon, Surrey CR3 3JA, (35p); **Games Gazette**, 4 Old Barn Rd, Leybourne, Maidstone, Kent ME19 5HQ, (95p); **Wargame News**, Mike Costello, 17 Langbank Ave, Rise Park, Notts NG5 5BU, (70p); **Fire & Movement** and **Autoduel Quarterly**, Steve Jackson Games, PO Box 18957, Austin, Texas 78760-8957, *plus UK retail*, ($3 / $2.50); **Brian Dolton Bk / Flower Pressing**, Paul Mason, 24 Moor St, Earlsdon, Coventry CV5 6EQ, (15p).

Fantasy Advertiser, Martin Lock, 3 Marlow Court, Britannia Sq, Worcester WR1 3DP, (40p); **Vector**, **Matrix** and **Paperback Inferno**, BSFA, Sandy Brown, 18 Gordon Terrace, Blantyre, Lanarkshire G72 9NA, (75p / - / 15p).

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Letters

After taking a month off for good behaviour, the letters page is back, to allow you to air your views, and to give me the chance to sharpen what passes for biting wit around here. If you hold an opinion on any subject that might interest adventure gamers, then send it in to: IMAGINE magazine (letters), The Mill, Rathmore Road, CAMBRIDGE CB1 4AD.

Letters appearing in this column may be edited for length.

This first letter, following on from the many we have already seen in these pages in the past, puts a whole new slant on the 'women in the hobby' debate.

Victoria Kassner, London: As a woman, very interested in the concept of role-playing games, may I say a few words on the scarcity of women in RPG circles?

I spotted your magazine in my local newsagents, bought it, and read it cover-to-cover. That was your first issue, back in April, and I have enjoyed another six since. I have not, however, despite a desire to do so, been able to play a single one of the games covered in IMAGINE magazine. Why not? Because I don't know another person who either knows how to play, or has the enthusiasm to start from scratch.

It has been said that it is best for a novice to learn from experienced players. But where does one find them? The magazine is reaching out to a wider audience, so why does it have the feel of a small club, with 'in-jokes' and the same people mentioned all the time?

What I have said so far could apply to a novice male as well as a novice female, but there are more deterrents for women. There are so few women; a lone female can feel terribly out of place. One impression conveyed in your magazine is that the men nip off to the pub to play, talk about the hobby and drink beer.

Finally, there are the conventions. I, for one, would be very loath to go to one of these events as a total novice, knowing no-one, and I'm sure many women would agree with me. Men have more freedom in certain respects; it isn't unusual for a man to enter a public place on his own, but a woman is different.

I won't find out if I have the ability to make a good role-player unless I get the chance to try. How do you take that first step? I don't think you'll get more women into the hobby until you start asking them.

Victoria's letter shook up the collective complacencies here – we thought we were developing the magazine to provide potential players with the help they need to find their way into this strange hobby of ours. I would ask all the inexperienced and novice players reading this page to write to me and tell me what we are doing right, and what we are doing ***wrong****. How did you take that first step into the hobby, and how could it be made easier for others?*

In Victoria's case, it was easy to make suggestions for her individual circumstances, that should solve her problem. But we are still aware that women do not find this an easy hobby to accept, or to join in. There are obvious exceptions, but we all admit it is not as easy for women to get involved as it is for men.

But then, role-playing games, when played by men, often reflect male pre-occupations, combat and such-like, as the means to character advancement. There's nothing wrong with this – it's meant to be fun after all, and the whole beauty of these games is that you play them as ***you*** *want to, not as the rules say. But there can be more to role-playing than this, and we occasionally print articles designed to show some alternatives. Which leads us nicely into this:*

Peter Schravendeel, Eindhoven, Holland: Pete Tamlyn's article (in #7) tries to tell the reader that RPGs can be played in a more sophisticated manner than is encountered in many cases. But it is not **rules** that make or break the game.

The Gamemaster creates and directs the game. He should be able to create a world and atmosphere in which the players can bring their characters to life. The GM should therefore carefully select a set of rules that fit into his fantasy world. These rules are to be used as an aid, not as a goal in themselves.

It's my belief that there should be, for game purposes, things like character classes; different professions open to the players, together with a system in which player characters can acquire all kinds of skills. I'm thinking of the DRAGON-QUEST® game system, or the development points-based system of Iron Crown's **Rolemaster** series.

As Peter went on to say, different GMs have different styles, and different players enjoy one kind or another. The rules and abstract devices are there to help a DM make something happen that goes beyond the vicarious enjoyment of 'combat'. Not everyone needs such help, but many GMs are constantly looking for more and better rules to bring a sense of consistent 'reality' to the campaign.

Some people had less polite things to say about Pete Tamlyn's contribution to IMAGINE magazine:

Helen French, Sevenoaks, Kent: I mean no offence to your magazine in general.... but is there any way you could do something about the senseless flow of garbage (is it natural or drug/drink induced?) from Poisonous Toerag[KGB TM]? Though I only want you to replace him (would Godfrey the Kobold be a worthwhile candidate?) if you don't wish to lose your best scorer against the other side, why not dilute him a bit (wherever he is unpleasant, print stars instead — on second thoughts, $^2/_3$ of a page of stars is going to look silly). After all, he has **Acolyte** to ramble on in. Please remind him that **White Dwarf** won Best SF/F Games Magazine, not **IMAGINE**, and **Dragonlords**, not Acolyte, won Best Games Fanzine at Games Day '83. Get rid of Poisonous Toerag[KGB TM] and your mag is almost perfect.

Helen was one of a small number of people who found Pete a bit strong in #9, and we're sorry that these people took offence. In fact we don't see IMAGINE magazine as being in competition with any particular magazine – we're trying to do something different, which is why we have gone out of our way to bring you different features; cartoons, fiction, book reviews etc, along with the best from the gaming world. Pete is part of that strategy – and any sparring between ***Tavern Talk*** *and* ***Super Mole*** *is just a bit of fun. And on the subject of humour....*

Robert Walker, Thurso, Scotland: My school club is wearing me down. A couple of lads will kill off a member of the party 'for a laugh', so they can joke about it afterwards. Then I have two lads who insist on being Chaotic or Lawful Evil, and, as 1st level thieves, they'll try to pick the party's pockets. Of course, most of the time, they fail, get killed.... and then go away and roll up another one. When convinced of their folly, they come back as LG paladins, and the party kills them anyway! We play four-hour sessions, and I doubt if play occupies half of that. I like fast-moving games, not daft arguments about where you'd put a ballista on a ship.

I know the feeling. A group I play with, and sometimes DM, find decision making almost impossible. Hence, my normally shrewd, fourth-level thief, who finds the idea of picking pockets rather ***old-fashioned****, tends to end up stretched out on the floor, receiving attention from the clerics, while the fighter-types argue about who* ***would*** *have gone through the door first....*

Like other GMs I know, I tend to run an alignment system where the edges are blurred, but where certain behavioural habits can be associated with individual alignments. But while I would normally insist that an LG cleric should get offended by evil behaviour, I wouldn't expect one to jump into the jaws of death every time – who would? By the same criteria, CE thieves aren't forced to pick pockets to comply with their alignment; at low levels they know they're likely to fail. GMs should take many other factors into account when monitoring the behaviour of player characters – and when players insist on spoiling the game for others by stupid actions, arrange an equally stupid accident for them. They won't laugh much after the third of their CE thieves slips on a banana skin....

Letters edited by Paul Cockburn

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as reviewed in

WHITE DWARF Nº 37

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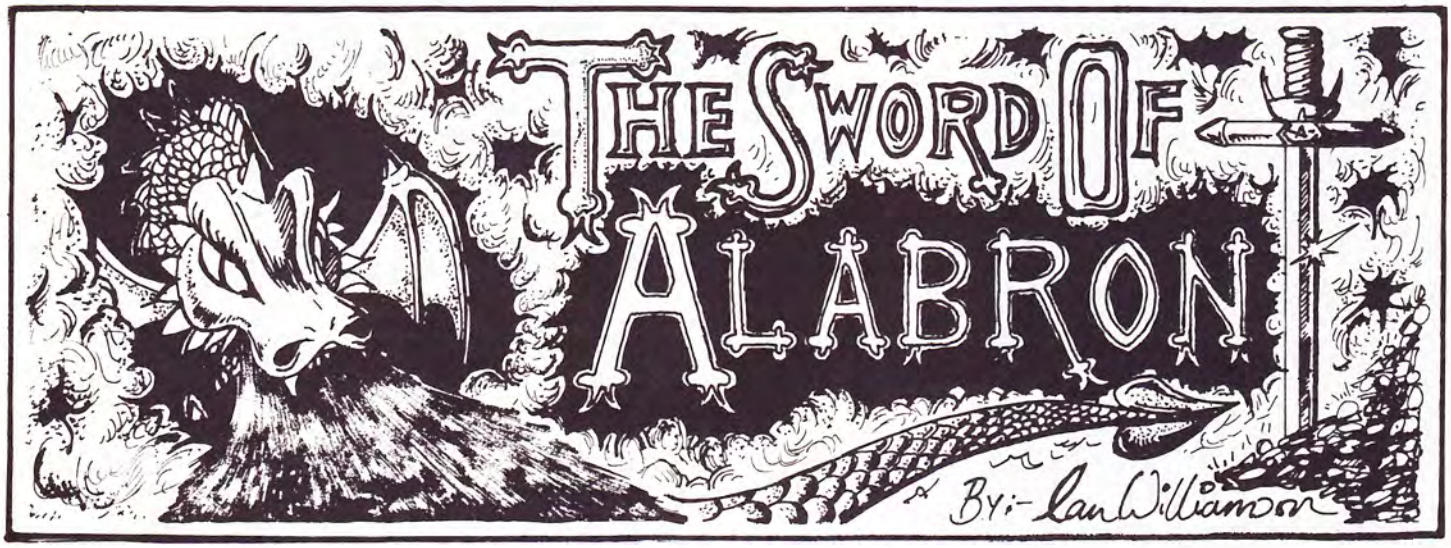
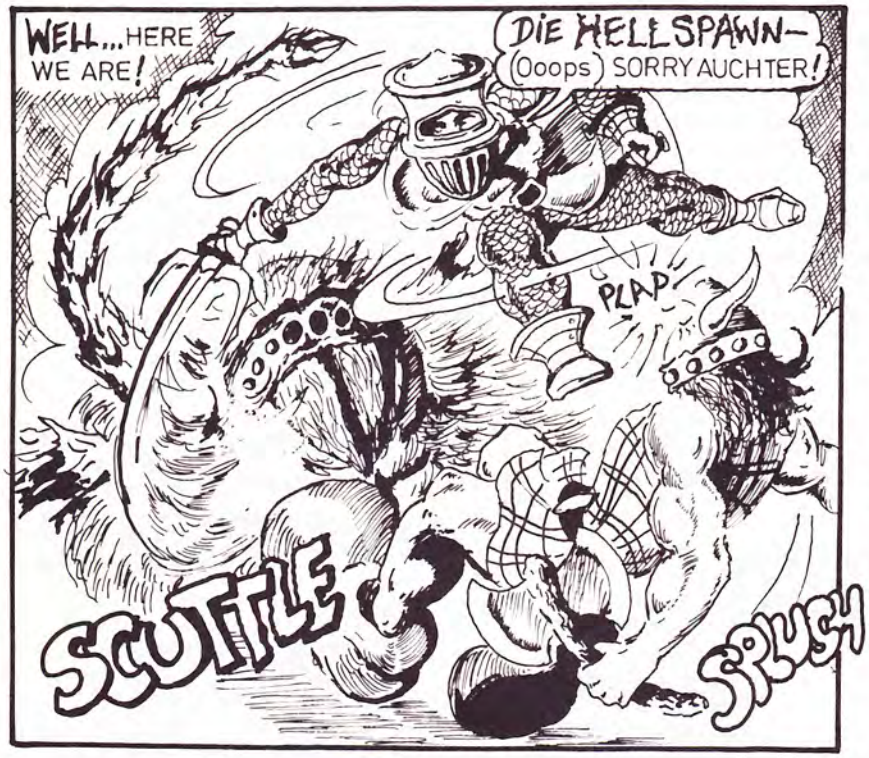

THE SWORD OF ALABRON
By:- Ian Williamson

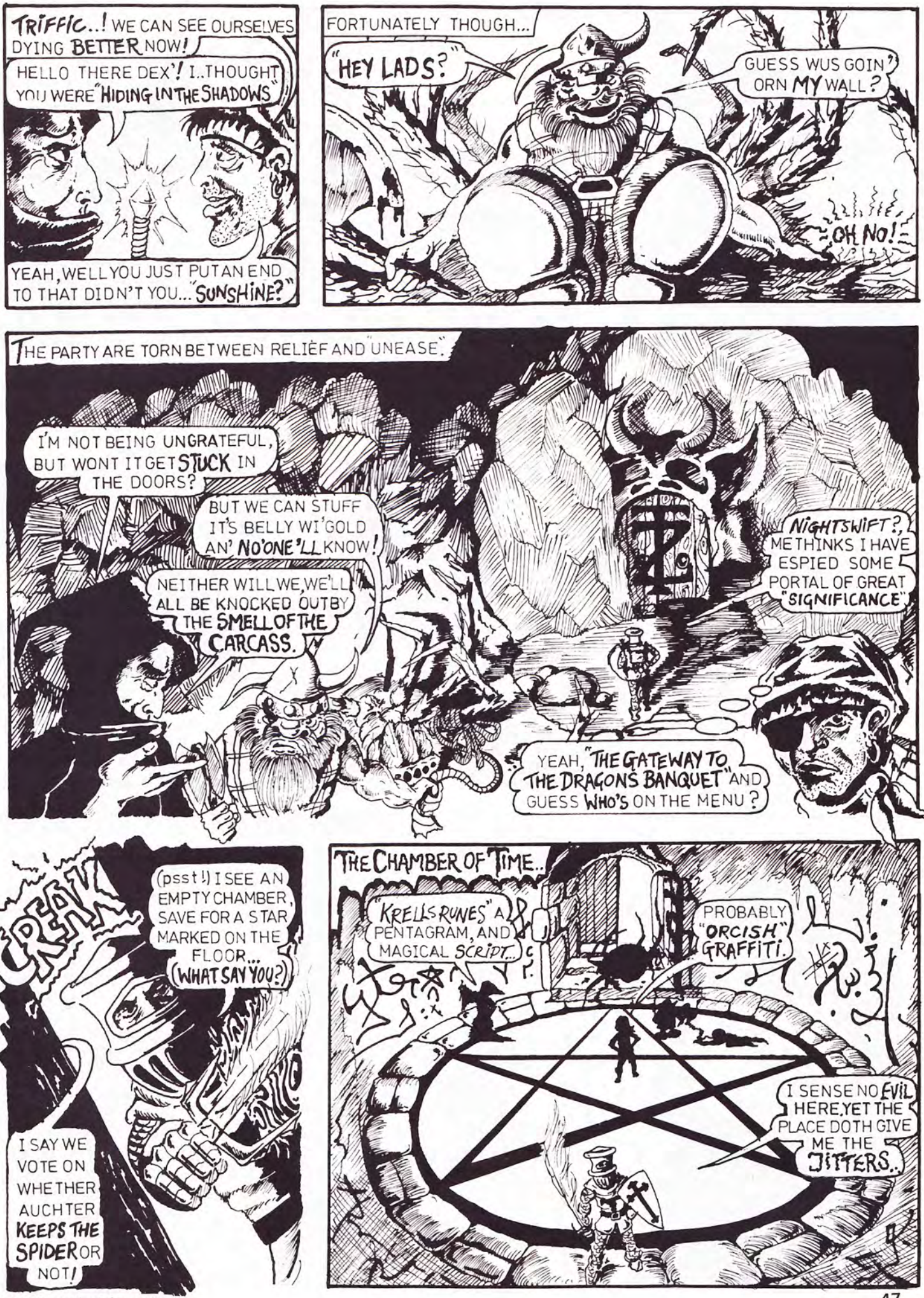

WELL... HERE WE ARE!
DIE HELLSPAWN— (Ooops) SORRY AUCHTER!
PLAP
SCUTTLE
SPLUSH

THE BATTLE RAGES.
I.TS OKAY, THERES NOTHING FOLLOWING BACK HERE...
BACK WHERE?!
...ABOUT 400 YARDS DOWN THIS TUNNEL NIGHTSWIFT

MEMORIZING ONE OF THE FOUR ARCHAIC COMMANDS, THE HEAVENS TREMBLE AS NIGHTSWIFT UNLEASHES THE WAND OF?
?
DINK
(oh dear) ILLUMINATION?

(MMMPH) SWIFT! IN KRELLS NAME... THE (MMMPH) WAND!

BOUNCE
ACH! NO' THE "WIZARD." AI WUS HAV'N FUN!
(Oooops almost forgot! what a—) STAND BACK. THE HOUR OF THE MAGICIAN HAS COME.


TRIFFIC..! WE CAN SEE OURSELVES DYING BETTER NOW!
HELLO THERE DEX'! I..THOUGHT YOU WERE "HIDING IN THE SHADOWS"
YEAH, WELL YOU JUST PUT AN END TO THAT DIDN'T YOU... "SUNSHINE?"
FORTUNATELY THOUGH...
"HEY LADS?"
GUESS WUS GOIN' ORN MY WALL?
OH NO!
THE PARTY ARE TORN BETWEEN RELIEF AND "UNEASE".
I'M NOT BEING UNGRATEFUL, BUT WONT IT GET STUCK IN THE DOORS?
BUT WE CAN STUFF IT'S BELLY WI' GOLD AN' NO'ONE'LL KNOW!
NEITHER WILL WE, WE'LL ALL BE KNOCKED OUT BY THE SMELL OF THE CARCASS.
NIGHTSWIFT?, METHINKS I HAVE ESPIED SOME PORTAL OF GREAT "SIGNIFICANCE"
YEAH, "THE GATEWAY TO THE DRAGON'S BANQUET" AND GUESS WHO'S ON THE MENU?
CREAK
(psst!) I SEE AN EMPTY CHAMBER, SAVE FOR A STAR MARKED ON THE FLOOR... (WHAT SAY YOU?)
I SAY WE VOTE ON WHETHER AUCHTER KEEPS THE SPIDER OR NOT!
THE CHAMBER OF TIME..
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PROBABLY "ORCISH" GRAFFITI.
I SENSE NO EVIL HERE, YET THE PLACE DOTH GIVE ME THE JITTERS..

NIGHTSWIFT CASTS A READ MAGIC
THE WALLS SAY "FIVE IS THE NUMBER, THE NUMBER IS FIVE TO VIEW THE SECRET..
..OF "THE CHAMBER OF TIME".
THERE A' FIVE OF US.. IF YOO COONT "BORG"!
AND SIX (ie one too many) IF YOU COUNT THE SPIDER!
AI BUT MA' SPIDERS DEED
YEAH (choke) "DONT WE KNOW?"
PERHAPS IF WE ENDEAVOUR TO COUNT TO FIVE?
MA SPIDER HAS FIVE LEGS...
FOOL, ALL ARACHNIDS HAVE EIGHT!
YOO HAV'NAE SEEN MINE RECENTLY.
WHAT A PITY WE CANT SOLVE IT...WELL THATS LIFE HEY?
SO HOW ABOUT SOME FRESH AIR?
WAIT! I BELIEVE I HAVE IT, STAND IN THE FIVE POINTS OF THE STAR...
NO SOONER ARE THEY IN POSITION THAN.—
KA-POOM-PH
HEAR ME O MORTALS, FOR I AM GARDOR OF OLD... I, WHO AM OLDER THAN THE STARS, WISER THAN... (oh forget all that, I'll get on with it) "WHEN THE GUARDIAN YOU MEET APPARELLED IN BLACK, PAY HIM HIS WAY, OR FOREVER TURN BACK! FOR WALLS SHALL TURN COLD, WITH AIR FROZEN ICE. THEN SHALL YOU FIND GOLD...
CHOKE!
COUGH!
..BUT GOLD AT A PRICE. FOR IF YOU ARE PURE YOU SHALL HEAR THE SONG. AND THERE YOU WILL FIND THE SWORD... ALABRON!"
CHOKE
COUGH
WHAT'S HE (CHOKE) SAYING?
I CANT (COUGH) EVEN SEE HIM..
NEXT THE BEAST OF FIVE HEADS

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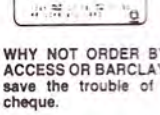

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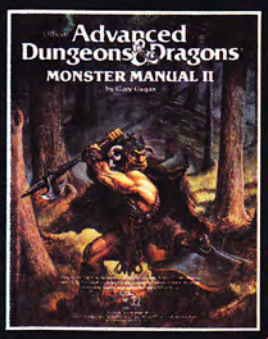
The producers at TSR wish to thank the Outer Planes of Good, and the Lower Outer Planes of Gehenna for making the crowd scenes such fun.



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